

June, 1938

The American Mercury



Chastity on the Campus	By a Co-Ed
If America Goes Fascist.	William Y. Elliott
Three-Ring Circus for Morons	Albert L. Bell
Why the Farmer Fails	Chesla C. Sherlock
The Real Communist Menace	Lawrence Dennis
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Only Suckers Buy Wholesale	I. A. Hirschmann
Down the Rat-Hole.	Albert Jay Nock
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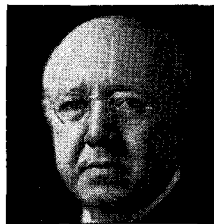
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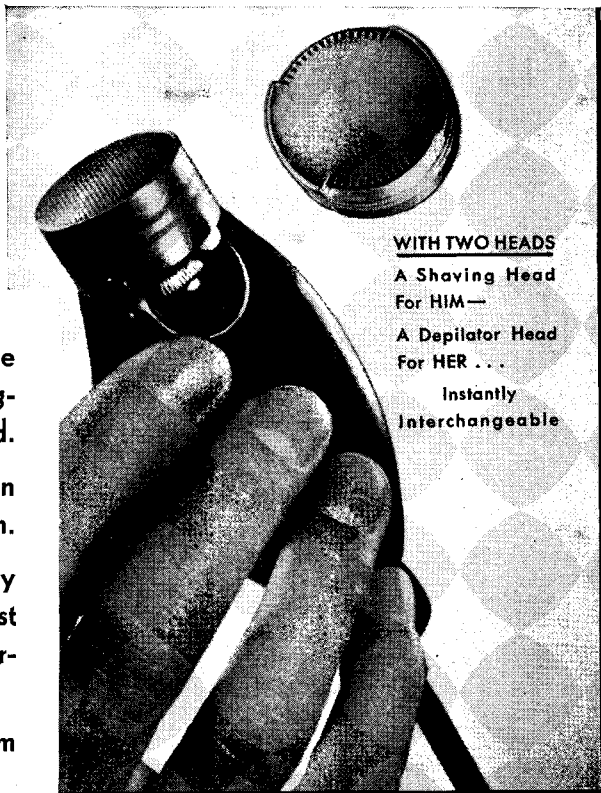
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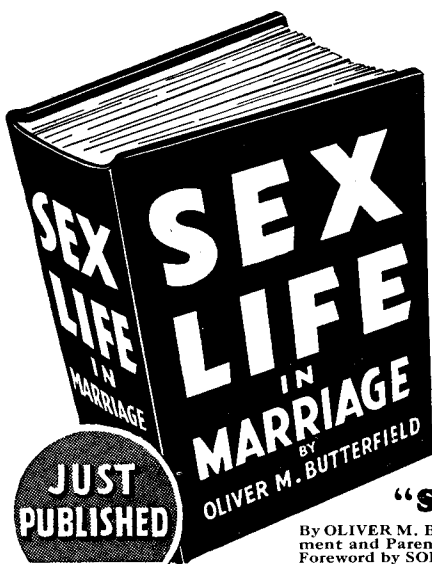
episode. Miss Phyllis Bottome is a competent novelist. It is evident that her sympathies are deeply engaged, but she has been as faithful to her medium as to her principles — not an easy achievement. You will compare it to *The Oppermanns*: because of her restraint, which is also an essential of craftsmanship, it is superior in all respects.

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(Continued on page 229)



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The American MERCURY

WHAT CAN THE REPUBLICANS DO?

BY HAROLD LORD VARNEY

NOTHING is more paradoxical in the present Depression than the persistent popularity of Franklin D. Roosevelt. By all the precedents of American politics, he should already be safely embalmed in the political mausoleum as a Depression casualty. Instead — although he has undoubtedly slipped with his former middle-class support — his grip upon the vote-dominant proletariat is unweakened. To the consternation of Republicans, he is riding out the storm.

The other day the magazine *Fortune*, which foretold the 1936 result with uncanny accuracy, gave us a new sampling of Roosevelt popularity. The test question was on approval or disapproval of the New Deal policies. Of those interrogated, 64.7 per cent expressed

continued approval: only 17 per cent expressed unqualified opposition. It was an astounding revelation of continued public assent for an Administration which has plunged the nation into the most inexcusable Depression of modern times.

For American Conservatism, this continued New Deal luster is a disturbing portent. It shatters the easy-going conviction of many that the Republican forces are destined to return automatically to power on the rebound of New Deal failure. It points to the grim possibility that Radical leadership may continue to be ascendant in America, even without Mr. Roosevelt and without the promised More Abundant Life. It brings the haunting thought that 1940 may

see the advent of a new regime which will be more, instead of less, Jacobin than that of Mr. Roosevelt.

In its wider implications, the Roosevelt popularity poses before American Conservatism (which politically means the Republican Party) the problem of leadership. If the President has been able to hold his public through five years of inglorious fumbles, it is implicit that something is desperately wrong with his opposition. Even the most besotted New Deal addict will now admit that the early conception of Roosevelt as a superman was an optical illusion. That the masses still support him in the white light of his revealed futility, is an inescapable proof that they trust his rivals even less. A quarter-back without a touchdown, Mr. Roosevelt has taken on heroic stature in the popular view only by an adroit dramatization of the lesser evil. At every crisis point, he has short-circuited attention from his own inadequacy by a Kleiglihted flagellation of the opposing "selfish few". Obviously, only a demoralized and mediocre opposition could have been vanquished by such contemptible hokum.

If the American Right is to regain a virile, self-confident leadership, its first duty must be one of merciless self-analysis. It is not

enough to blame the plight of Conservatism upon external and fortuitous forces. A leadership which has the capacity to lead is the master, and not the victim, of history. If American Conservatism is now in the doghouse, it should first turn to itself and not to the Laodicean Mr. Roosevelt for the cause of its predicament.

Looking backward over the last decade, it is now easy to see where American Conservatism lost its control of events. What the old leadership failed to perceive, at the bottom of the Depression, was the magnitude of the skepticism and unrest which was gripping the masses. This skepticism of a once-acquiescent public was born when business leadership revealed its feet of clay. The old Conservative order was the psychological product of the myth of Capitalist genius: and when, in the panic of 1931 and 1932, the once arrogant Capitalist high command collapsed into a gibbering and fear-paralyzed mob, the legend of a masterful Capitalism died in millions of American minds. The people turned instinctively to political instead of business leadership for crisis direction. They found Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The error of most contemporary Conservatives is their refusal to ac-

cept the finality of this change. Conservatives prefer to believe that this apostasy of the people represents only a temporary and passing mood. After a brief flurry of mild, Rooseveltian anti-Capitalism, they reason, the people will snap back into their habitized Republican and Conservative ways. The old era of effortless and painless Conservative victories will be happily resumed. In such reasoning, I think, Conservatives are making a suicidal mistake. They are underestimating the deep, driving urge toward equalitarianism which is now obsessing the proletarian mind. They have mistaken a political tidal wave for a freshet. Europe gives us a revealing picture of the potency of this popular upsurge. We are witnessing in America, on a smaller scale, the phenomenon which has written the history of Europe during the last decade — the invasion of the once-quiet mass-man into the *mise en scène* of politics. Once having tasted the intoxicating drafts of power which Mr. Roosevelt has given him, it is inconceivable that the mass-man will voluntarily return to his former role of obscurity and subordination. He has discovered the feebleness of the Capitalist defenses of the established order. He has learned that militance and class-conscious or-

ganization can extract a continuing stream of benefits from a Capitalist system which is willing to pay ransom for its continued existence.

Probably one reason why American Conservatives have underestimated the significance of this mass upheaval is because, unlike its European prototypes, it has been largely free of ideologies. While overt Socialism and Communism have unquestionably played an immense role in breaking down popular faith in Capitalism, the resulting mass re-orientation, outside of immigrant centers like New York, has not been consciously Marxian. The millions of propertyless men and women who blindly follow President Roosevelt have little interest in concrete blueprints for social reconstruction. They are vaguely anti-Capitalist, but their unrest is a homespun, indigenous Radicalism which stems from past Progressive traditions, rather than from European models. It is true that they are willing to co-operate intimately with Communists and Socialists in United Fronts whenever their bellwethers such as Roosevelt, Governor Benson or Mayor La Guardia give the signal for such co-operation — a fact which is in vastly significant contrast with their former attitudes. But they recoil from the imputation that they

themselves are anything more than traditional American Progressives. Their primary concern is to transfer political power from the hands of the property-holding classes to the hands of the propertyless. The social program which will result from such an elevation of the submerged remains nameless in their minds. Conservatives trained to think in self-proclaimed categories of Socialism, Communism, and Capitalism, easily miss the significance of a movement whose apparent formlessness conceals the fact that it is undubitably the American expression of the long-feared Socialist Revolution.

II

How do American Conservatives propose to meet the challenge of this new popular alignment? It is a heartening sign that the Republican Party, under the leadership of Dr. Glenn Frank, has now set itself the task of exploring the possibilities of a new and adequate Conservative-Liberal national policy. Unfortunately, it will find that little spade work has been done in preparation. Most of the Republicans who have come out of their storm cellars are not even attempting to meet the challenge of the new politics: ostrich-like, they are

denying it. Those few realistic thinkers who actually comprehend the fact of a changed electorate, may be divided into two general groups. On the one hand, there are the Die-Hards who accept the challenge of United Front Radicalism and who propose to resist it without truce, and without retreat from their traditional position. On the other extreme are the Defeatists who have become so dubious of Capitalist success against the new politics that they favor a reconstruction of the Republican Party along lines equally or even more anti-Capitalist than the New Deal, in order that they may survive as a rallying center for rear-guard action in a Socialistic age that is to follow. It will require little analysis to show that neither of these positions holds promise for a victorious Republican Party.

The Die-Hards, of course, represent the more admirable of these two approaches. They, at least, have a fixed star of principle and conviction. Their ideal is the old Liberal-Capitalist regime, now defunct. They accept the economics of the pre-Depression era as a norm to which America must return. They would restore the gold standard, dismantle the bureaucratic agencies which restrain private enterprise, unshackle the market,

drastically slash taxes, limit Relief to its irreducible minimum, repeal the Wagner Act *in toto*, and halt pump-priming. Were such a program politically achievable it would undoubtedly be the integrating platform for Republicans and all other New Deal foes. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the existing political picture which shows a disposition, by any discernable part of the non-Republican voting public, to accept such a reversed policy. Economically it is an admirable goal: politically it is as unattainable as the resurrection of William Jennings Bryan.

The trouble with the Die-Hard position, of course, is that it stands or falls upon the ability of America to return to a low-price, low-wage economy. And there is no sizeable interest in America which is genuinely desirous of a return to low prices. The strategic position in politics is always that of the high-wage-price party. Hence, an inflationary platform is always more seductive politically than the most defensible program of deflation. On this issue, Mr. Roosevelt is on the historically popular side.

The Die-Hards, although they may shrink from an acceptance of the word, actually propose that America now go through all the painful and merciless deflationary

processes from which the nation turned aside in 1933. The restoration of the gold standard, the balancing of the budget by the end of pump-priming, the lifting of government controls, would tear our now-abnormal economy apart. Unquestionably, out of the tragic process would come a sounder national economy. But is it thinkable that an American electorate which has been enervated by five years of Roosevelt bottle-feeding will voluntarily vote for such a program of self-purgation? The supposition, of course, is fantastic. And yet it is the dilemma of the Die-Hard position that all these readjustments must be made or private enterprise will be unworkable. The Die-Harders have all the political virtues except the single and most important virtue of all — the ability to get themselves elected.

The other program — the program of Defeatism — is even less attractive to a self-respecting Republican Party. This program may be briefly described as one of beating the New Dealers to the gun with anti-Capitalist proposals. It is a program — largely empiric and amorphous as yet — which has risen out of the mood of desperation and planlessness which has gripped Republican office-holders during the Roosevelt years. Those

few Republicans who have succeeded in holding seats in Congress, or Governorships, during the years of the Roosevelt locust, have found themselves playing a continuous game of wits with the demagogues in their constituencies who have schemed to supplant them. They have had to make concessions to the organized Radical minorities in their districts. Some of them, impressed with the apparent success of these concessions, are now soberly proposing that the national Republican movement enter into similar combinations with some of the most disreputable United Front camp-followers.

An amusing example of this new attitude was seen in the recent Lincoln Day speech of Governor Aiken of Vermont who, after scoring all other Republican celebrities for their Conservatism and lack of program, offered the incredible self-exhibition of proposing as a national Republican issue the defense of the New Jersey Communists against Mayor Hague. An even more significant instance is Leader Kenneth F. Simpson's suggestion that the recent alliance of the New York City Republicans with the Socialists and Communists was a pattern which showed national Republicanism "how victories are to be

won". But even Leader Simpson does not go so far in absurdity as William Allen White who humorlessly proposes that the Republicans nominate Mayor La Guardia for President in 1940. While the fact that the Emporia editor also boasts of being the original Landon proposer in 1936 gives a comedy touch to his pretensions as a Presidential Warwick, such a preposterous suggestion is a sign of the extremely cloudy thinking to which the Defeatists are now surrendering themselves.

What is unwholesomely wrong with all this Left-opportunist and Defeatist maneuvering is that it is a symptom of an ingrowing malady of minority-mindedness. It is the political parallel of the baseball player who, having always played with a hopelessly second-division club, finds himself instinctively playing for his individual batting average, rather than for the victory of the team. Obviously, such is not the way to retouch the imagination of the lost American masses for a national Republican program.

III

Somewhere between the serene but impolitic economic orthodoxy of the Die-Harders, and the abjection of the Defeatists lies the winning

political strategy of America's Republican Liberal-Conservatives. It is not yet formulated, but its broad outlines are now becoming apparent. It is to be distinguished from either of the present schools of Republican thought by its unflinching realism. It recognizes the fact of a permanently-changed political temper and group-alignment of the American electorate. It does not waste time in the futile discussion of the desirability or the undesirability of the re-alignment. It realizes that no party ever won a victory by debating with history. At the same time it differs from the disciples of the Simpsons and the Whites in its recognition that Republicanism has no destiny except as an anti-Marxian formation of the Liberal-Conservatives of the country, and that it cannot survive if it now stultifies itself by unclean mesalliances with the half-castes of Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal.

The most imperative quality of the new Republican strategy must be activism. Nothing has contributed more to the glamor of Mr. Roosevelt's regime than the widespread impression of the doddering impotence of the rival Republicans. Mr. Roosevelt has seemed a superman because in the public mind there has been the stereotype that his opponents were pigmies.

He has sold a crack-brained program to the American electorate simply because his adversaries have seemed to have no program at all. As we have shown, much of this apparent stolidity of Republicans has resulted from the attempt to construct party policies on the assumption of America's return to an orthodox economy. Party programs have been based upon a nostalgia, rather than upon a quickened sense of the changing current of events. As long as Republicanism was locked in this reactionary dilemma, Mr. Roosevelt was easily able to monopolize the political footlights by his ability to move agilely from sensation to sensation. Too many Republicans have drifted into the sectarian delusion of assuming that, because they were right, the people must eventually return to their guidance. Republican clubhouses have degenerated into depressing catchalls for all the futile forces of American inertia.

Unfortunately, there is no rationality in political events. Successful leaders win mass-followings, not because they are right, but because they are able to achieve the effect of self-assured activism. In an age of mass-man politics, showmanship is more important than orthodoxy. Mr. Roosevelt has

drawn the youthful and vital forces of the country to his jerry-built New Deal because he has been able to infuse them with the belief that they were participants in an epochal and dynamic political adventure. That Republican leader who offers them a program which seems more convincingly dynamic can take these volatile enthusiasts away from the New Deal. But he cannot win them by quietism.

As Republicans approach the problem of strategy-building, one fact must be kept unwaveringly in mind — that there can be no hope of a defeat of Mr. Roosevelt or his successor in 1940 unless the Republican Party can win the support of the millions of non-Communist wage-earners. The hope of Republican victory in 1940 is centered upon the ability to recapture from the New Deal such top-heavily industrial States as Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts. In these States, victory is mathematically impossible without the labor vote. Accordingly, Republicans must definitely abandon any design to champion a wage-deflation policy, or to scuttle the Wagner Act, as long as the A F of L favors its continuance. If a policy acceptable to the A F of L leadership and to the railway brother-

hoods is evolved, it is no exaggeration to say that labor offers the most promising field for Republican proselytization during the coming two years. There is a widespread illusion, resulting from Marxian propaganda, that American labor is a composite whole. Actually, the ideological gap between the skilled A F of L unionist and the Communist-babbling Relief-roll racketeer is wider and bitterer than the gap between employer and employee. Republicans can leave the Relievers, the negroes, and the bulk of the CIO to Mr. Roosevelt: there remains a body of normally-Conservative labor voters who can turn the tide of the election. It would be disastrous if the party strategists permitted the dwindling company of union-baiters on the extreme right of Republicanism to wreck this possibility. Intelligent Capitalists, conscious of the spirit of the times, would be wise to welcome A F of L unionism, rather than exacerbate a social situation which will inevitably drive Conservative workers into the hands of the Communists and the CIO.

Likewise, the Republican Party cannot possibly achieve the effect of activism unless it addresses itself to the task of formulating a program of social reform more auda-

cious and more soundly-conceived than the present offerings of Mr. Roosevelt. If this shocks the stand-pattism of many elder Republicans, let it be recalled that the role of pace-setter for social reforms is not a new role for Conservative parties. Britain with its invincible Tory Democracy has long shown us the pattern for such Socialist-defeating strategy. But even before Disraeli and the first Chamberlain, it was Bismarck who confounded the infant German Socialist movement by annexing to the Right program all of the feasible social reforms of Lassalle. "It is time for us to realize," Bismarck said as early as 1871, "what parts of the Socialist demands are reasonable and right, and to what extent these reasonable elements can be incorporated into the extant State system." The fact that, historically, the Socialist challenge has come much later to America than to the European countries gives us the incalculable advantage of drawing upon trans-Atlantic Conservative experience in winning the masses from the Marxians. In an age such as ours, of mass insurgency and skepticism, it is inconceivable that a Conservative party can survive in competition with the Marxian parties without a broad and generous program of social welfare.

To the Republican Party the formulation of such a program is a matter of life and death.

But in proposing such a streamlined and socially-advanced strategy for Republicans it is important to bear in mind the limits of such opportunism. Mr. Roosevelt has given us a horrible example of what a Progressive-Capitalist party should not become. Mr. Simpson and Mr. White, with their chatter about the ludicrous La Guardia, similarly show the pitfalls which beset Republican feet when they begin to wander. Somewhere there is a sharp and uncrossable line which differentiates a healthy Capitalist-reform policy from the trick programs which are designed to make Capitalism unworkable and hence a prey for socialization. Mr. Roosevelt, presumably under the guidance of advisers who walk in the Marxian shadow, has never shown any awareness of the social danger of his experiments in Capitalist frustration. He has never shown a recognition of the fact that even a reformed Capitalism must make profits for its security holders, at the risk of the collapse of the investment market. Hence, American Capitalism has become waterlogged instead of nourished under his forcible-feeble policies. That such a New Deal has been

deeply pleasing to the Marxians is shown by the eulogistic Roosevelt editorials which appear in Mr. Stalin's New York *Daily Worker*.

The necessity that the Republican Party should be clear-mindedly anti-Marxian in its exploration of the country of social reform is imposed by the increasing impetus of the anti-Communist mass trend in America. Today, the two profoundest emotional political impulses in the world are Communism and anti-Communism. Since Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. La Guardia have already pre-empted the near-Communist position, it is only common sense that the Republicans should not affront the emotional urge of the counter cause.

At the same time, it is imperative that Republicans, in exploiting the anti-Communist issue, should not come to it from the reactionary approach. To be anti-Communist and also anti-labor would be fatal to any party appealing to the Progressive-minded electorate of contemporary America. Millions of propertyless and wage-earning voters in this country, either for religious or anti-alien reasons, are more embittered against the Communist challenge than are many Capitalists themselves. Father Coughlin, Huey Long, Dr. Townsend, and such rabble-rousing

evangels have disclosed the existence of a vast and restless lower-middle-class and proletarian population which is both anti-Communist and anti-reactionary. This is the public which Republicanism must reach in 1940 if it is to become a majority party. The strategy of New Deal defeat is not the mobilization of the middle and propertied classes: they are already in opposition. The true strategy is to smash the proletarian formation which today is almost unitedly behind Mr. Roosevelt because it has no other place to go. The non-Communist and non-alien elements of this formation can be won to Republicanism by a crusading, anti-Communist appeal.

Far-off though the goal may seem, the recapture of power is not impossible to a modern-minded Liberal-Conservative Leadership. But demagoguery cannot be conquered by sterility. Stubbornness in defying the obvious popular trends may lead Republicans, not to victory, but to an oblivion as fathomless as that which has engulfed the British Liberal Party. The mastery of the future belongs to men who are unerringly future-conscious. On its ability quickly to achieve such a leadership rests the present promise of a revindicated Republican Party.

A SOUTHERNER SURVEYS THE NORTH

BY SARAH LYNWOOD SLAY

HAVING read in certain Northern publications during the past few years various treatises on Conditions in the South, it occurred to me recently that there were probably Conditions in the North that would be very interesting to Southerners if only someone would make a careful Survey. Since I could interest none of my acquaintances in making such a Survey, and since the need for one seemed more urgent every day, I finally undertook to make a trip through the North myself with the intention of Interpreting Conditions. As will be apparent as this Survey progresses, most of the Conditions in the North are exceedingly unfortunate. I myself have no idea what could be done to remedy them, but it is my hope that this paper will show other writers that there is a wealth of unused material up North awaiting their efforts. Some person may eventually devise a means of improving the situation.

I hardly know where to begin; but I suppose the logical place is

with the first characteristic that one notices about Northern people. We have long known that Northerners, though somewhat similar in physical appearance, are a race quite different from us; but their complete lack of social graces must be simply incredible to one who has never observed them in their habitat. Their life is so pathetically lacking in the small niceties and dignities that we take for granted that I sometimes wonder why Northerners want to go on living at all. For one thing, Northern men are not gentlemen. I am aware that that is a shockingly bald statement; but it is nevertheless a fact that Northern men do not remove their hats in elevators, do not rise or even take their feet off their desks when ladies enter their offices, do not give ladies their seats in streetcars, and are extremely careless about letting ladies precede them through doorways.

I feel, however, that the men are not entirely to be blamed in this; for, much as it grieves me to say so, the typical Northern woman is

hardly what a Southerner thinks of as a Lady. She is so assured, so competent, and so efficient, that one cannot hold the men entirely responsible for unchivalrous conduct. But in fairness to Northern women I must say that I think they are more to be pitied than censured. I dislike to bring up such a thing, but it appears that Northern men, except among the very wealthy class, have some inherent incapacity that prevents most of them from being able to earn a sufficient living for their families. It is necessary that the wives work, too. So, in addition to being housewives they must also be business women. It thus is scarcely any wonder that Northern women become competent and efficient. A further result of this economic incapacity of Northern men is that very few Northern people can afford to have children. They have dogs instead, of whom they are almost as fond as we are of our children. They are as particular about their dog's diet, his doctor, his manners, his airings as any conscientious young parents. Since so few Northern people have children, I never quite understood the source of the huge populations and of the large groups of children that one sees in all the parks, playgrounds, streets, and on the

beaches. It is possible that Northerners import children from the overcrowded countries of Europe to replenish their stock.

I purposely omit here any mention of men's conduct in the Subways. This Survey is only of general, normal, and ordinary Conditions, and the behavior of both men and women in the Subways, while quite general, is neither normal nor ordinary. I feel that a competent psychiatrist would be much better qualified than I to discuss the matter. Suffice it to say that, immediately on entering a Subway Station, a strange maniacal fury seizes each individual until he has completed his journey and emerged into the open again. He seems obsessed by a passionate desire to get it over with as quickly as possible. To achieve this end he lets no obstacle, mortal or immortal, organic or inorganic, stand in his way. It seems to be a combination of a claustrophobic mania and a reversion to the animal law of the survival of the fittest.

But the discourtesies of the men are the smallest part of the general unmannerliness. Neither men nor women seem to have any regard for the sensibilities of other people. A group of friends will get on a train and each member will look for seats. When one finds a seat he

will lie across it to prevent anyone's taking it, and then will call at the top of his voice to the others that he has a seat. This necessity of taking physical possession of a found seat will seem strange to us who are used to being able to hold one by simply stating that it is being saved. I assure you, however, that it is a necessity. More than once I have seen a late-comer try to take a seat that is being saved. Then there is a struggle, sometimes physical, sometimes verbal; but with no discrimination as to sex. And in the meantime perhaps a third person has taken the seat. By that time a general melee is averted only by the arrival at their destination of the disputing parties.

Next to unmannerliness, the most dominant characteristic of the Northerner is a constant unreasoning hurry. He has no conception of the art of graceful living, being eternally in a hurry to get somewhere; then, immediately that he is there, being in a hurry to get back again. He hurries to work, and he hurries home from work. He hurries along the sidewalk, and in his car he hurries along the street; so that it is almost impossible for a pedestrian to cross a street in safety. He is in a hurry to get to his lunch; he eats it in a hurry, and then hurries back to his work. And

when he is not hurrying to anything, he still just hurries. Any device or procedure that can make any process consume a fraction less time is held in great esteem. If a steamship takes an hour less to cross the ocean, it is an event that inspires newspaper extras. An inventor who makes a machine that does two processes at once is a national hero.

The Northerner's lack of grace and ease extends, of course, into all his commercial life. I could give numerous instances, but I shall limit myself to a brief discussion of one. I had the opportunity of visiting the Stock Exchange and it was an experience not soon to be forgotten. The Exchange is a place of pandemonium and bedlam. The building is sound-proof, which is very fortunate for the inhabitants of neighboring buildings. Coming suddenly upon it, the noise is like the roar of a Gulf hurricane. There are some ante-rooms and offices in the building, but the exchanging of stocks is done in a huge gymnasium-like room which they call the "trading-floor", though whether the room has a floor in the literal sense one cannot be certain when looking down from the visitor's gallery; it is completely covered by weaving masses of men who may be standing on layers of

other men for all one can tell. The Exchange uses thousands of concealed noise-makers to produce the hurricane roar, which for some reason is considered essential to business. Of course, any conversation is impossible, but the sellers and buyers have ingeniously developed a sign language by which they carry out transactions. I do not like to make invidious comparisons, but when I think of the dignified quiet in which Southern gentlemen sit down with their juleps to reach a trade agreement, I cannot help thinking how much better for the nation it would be if such an atmosphere could prevail in the financial capital.

II

A great deal of my time in New York was spent in investigating Northern forms of Entertainment. My conclusion is that there is a great deal of room for Social Service work in this field, also. One outstanding Northern form of Entertainment is going to Night Clubs. All classes seem to do it. Night Clubs are places which serve food, of a sort, and drinks, also of a sort — at prices which would strain the credulity of my most trusting readers. If an establishment serves dinner for a price ranging up to three

dollars it is a *Restaurant*. From that price upward it is a *Night Club*.

In these Night Clubs, the Northerner disports himself with a most undignified hilarity. He performs gymnastic dances on the spur of the moment. He shouts to everyone in the room, particularly if the society editor or columnist of some newspaper is present. He speaks familiarly to the orchestra leader and the waiters, and appears quite pleased if these persons answer him by name. He throws confetti and blows toy horns and wears paper caps. It is the adult Northerner I am speaking of; children do not go to Night Clubs.

The better class of Northerners also amuse themselves with a sport they call *Week-Ending*. It is somewhat like visiting in one of our plantation homes, only the visit lasts just for a week-end and the host invites a group of people and tells them just when he wants them to leave. The guests never seem to be offended at being told when to go away. This is the only sort of visiting that Northerners do. They do not spend the day with each other or make nice month-long visits. And I am afraid there is not much visiting about this Week-Ending. It is just a constant state of being Entertained. The

host is expected to and does provide a number of standard Northern forms of Entertainment: bridge, poker, dice, dancing, cocktail drinking, and various forms of athletic activities. The guest is supposed to select the form of Entertainment he likes and to be always Entertained. If you just sit around and rest or even try to visit, it makes the host nervous and he will be certain that you are not enjoying yourself. The other guests will decide you are what they call a *Wash-Out*.

The guests do not necessarily know each other before the Week-End. The host may have invited a miscellaneous group who he thinks will like each other. The host himself may not know all the guests. He may have invited some acquaintance and asked him to bring some friend. I suspect that this happens more times than not and I know it is often the reason for the Week-End; the friend of the acquaintance usually being some one whom the host wants to meet and make an impression on because he hopes the acquaintance's friend will help him in a business or financial way.

This brings me to the third outstanding characteristic of Northerners—an insatiable desire for Money. The Money-Urge may be

a parent to the other two dominant traits. At least I can see the possibility of a logical relationship. This craving for Money goes far beyond that for a sufficient income on which to live gracefully. It goes to the point where the mere possession of Money becomes an end in itself and the basis of the Northern Social Structure.

In the North there are not the three distinctly-defined social groups—the aristocracy, the poor whites, and the negroes—as with us. The Social Structure in the North is much more complicated than that of the South. There are all sorts of in-between groups with no very clear distinction between them. The distinction that does exist is based mostly on the possession, or the expectation of possession, of Money, though some consideration is made for ability to obtain free publicity. They have what they consider an Aristocracy. That is, the most wealthy or the most widely publicized are considered the most aristocratic, and the least wealthy and the least well-known are the least aristocratic.

There is, too, a sort of Super-Aristocracy of extremely wealthy people. Its mark consists in having one's name registered in what they call the *Social Register*. This is a Stud-Book of the group. It is from

the cream of the *Social Register* group that the cigarette and cosmetic manufacturers select Endorsers of their products; so that a newly-wealthy family, although having achieved recognition by the *Register*, does not feel certain of itself until one of its members has been asked to Endorse some nationally-advertised article. Rich people who are not quite wealthy enough to be in the *Register* have been known to try to bribe manufacturers to let them Endorse their products; but the manufacturers are said to be incorruptible in this matter.

Northerners, for some reason, are immensely impressed by the superlative degree of anything. Perhaps it is because of their perverted respect for Money, because Money is usually necessary to obtain a really good superlative. Terms such as *the highest, the biggest, the quickest, the newest, the swellest, the oldest, the most, the first, the only*, mean a great deal to Northerners. Thus New York takes fanatical pride in having the tallest building, New Yorkers seeming to have a particular esteem for height. Chicago boasts a great deal about having the largest playground in the world, and the building with the most floor space and plate glass, Chicagoans leaning

more to area. Bostonians will proudly tell you that Boston consumes more beans than any other city. And Philadelphians that their city has more statues to dead heroes.

III

I cannot bring this study to a close without saying something about Northern Housing Conditions, which are as unfortunate as other Conditions in the North. Most people, especially in New York City, live in large apartment houses. I mean the houses are large — not the apartments. At least the Northerners call them houses; they are really indistinguishable on the outside from the business buildings, and on the inside from hotels, being set on the sidewalk touching each other and each having a doorman, a lobby, a phone clerk, and elevators. The apartments usually consist of one small room with one closet that holds a kitchen stove and another that contains a folding bed.

Some of the well-to-do people can afford two- and three-room apartments, and on the outskirts of town a few people even have real houses. But most of the houses are tiny and close together, and usually two or three families live in one of

them. Front porches, front yards, back yards, and flower gardens are unknown. One whole side of a street will have houses all exactly alike, so that the only way a person can tell which is his is to know the number of his house and begin at one end of the row and count down to his own. A person with a faulty memory for numbers has to go and look into each house until he finds his own. Even this is difficult, because all the houses have identical furnishings, and all the wives look very much alike.

Along with Housing Conditions I must mention another unfortunate Northern Condition: the lack of good cooks and hence the Northerner's complete ignorance of good food. One reason, perhaps, for the lack of good cooking is the Northern aversion to fresh foods of any kind—any food that does not come out of a tin can is not thought fit for human consumption. This may be a product of the hurry urge; for canned food is half-cooked, and has only to be warmed to be ready to eat—or at least ready to serve. The Northerner

eats canned vegetables—peas, corn, spinach, turnips; canned meat—beef, ham, fish, hash, chicken (if one can believe it!); and canned soup. He also wants his raw foods canned—canned pineapple, peaches, pears; and even canned orange juice, canned milk, and canned salad-dressing. He feeds his dog canned dog-food, and his cat canned cat-food, and his children canned children's food.

In reading over this Survey I am painfully aware of its limitations. It is extremely superficial; and I have sometimes recorded astounding facts without giving any explanation. But let me plead in extenuation that I am blazing a trail in virgin soil. I am trying, first, to give to a large group of readers a study of a race of people of whom they have little knowledge; second, to point the way by which other writers may make more detailed Studies. My justification is that I am trying to attract the interest of scholars and sociologists to the plight of an unfortunate people who are, after all, Americans too.



THE REAL COMMUNIST MENACE

BY LAWRENCE DENNIS

THE time has come to take Communism seriously. I mean Communism as the dynamic force which is driving us relentlessly toward social disintegration and world war. The word itself is now, of course, frequently in the news and often serves as a popular topic of conversation; but it is treated too much as a subject in the same class with the Single Tax, Norman Thomas, or the Republican Party, all of which are relatively academic questions distinctly remote from such life-and-death issues as war, peace, and our daily bread. It is time to get down to hard facts.

Our so-called Red-Baiters render a useful service by constantly drawing attention to the Communist peril; but their treatment of the subject is much too crude. The Communist menace, it must be remembered, is not crude: it is extremely subtle. Thus, only subtle analysis can adequately expose it. The Communist orator in Union Square, or organizer in the CIO, is usually a crude proposition: by his blatant mouthings and vulgar ges-

turings he may offend the sensibilities of many of our best citizens; but he is no more a menace to our institutions than Minsky's Burlesque was a menace to our morals. Communism, as a phenomenon of bad taste, is of minor importance. The career Communists of the metropolitan slums are more of a liability than an asset to Moscow — as Moscow knows only too well. The real Communist menace is constituted by the Party's idealism, revolutionary ideology, and revolutionary strategy. These are the principal social forces now hastening humanity toward war and disintegration.

In support of this statement let us first consider war. At the time of this writing two major wars are in progress: one in China, the other in Spain. In both, Communism was a prime cause. In both, Communism still figures as a powerful operative factor. Furthermore, the Fascist bloc — Italy, Germany, and Japan — must be recognized as among the chief war-potentials of the day: and what is it that chiefly

activates this coalition of mighty powers? The fear of Communism. Thus present or future war cannot be adequately described without due recognition of the major element of Communism. Secondly, as to social disintegration, it is only necessary to point out that, just as the Fascists owe their successes largely to their opposition to Communism, just so do the Liberal Democracies owe their present demoralization mainly to their tolerance of the same evil. The inevitable consequences of tolerating Communism are clearly seen in the present economic collapse of America and France, where Communist ideals and ideas shaped the administrations of Messrs. Roosevelt and Blum. Similarly, the break-up of the League of Nations is largely the consequence of its exploitation by Comrade Litvinoff as an instrument of Russian foreign policy. In a word, Communism has been acting, among nations, and within nations, somewhat as a catalytic acts in chemistry; a catalytic being an agent which, when introduced into a chemical compound, remains stable, but causes vital changes in the other elements. Communism is a disrupting agency in a society which sorely needs unifying forces.

Mr. Roosevelt, of course, is no

Communist. It would be an unwarranted flattery of his intellectual powers to accuse him of having assimilated Marxism. He does not even understand the system under which he was born, brought up, and subsidized. Marxism has given him neither a social philosophy nor a program. It has merely provided him with a motley assortment of confused ideas and dangerous emotional tendencies. His major contributions to the Communist World Revolution are those of a Liberal demagog preaching a holy war among the nations, the class war within his own nation, and the assertion by labor and agriculture of impossible economic demands on the Liberal economic system. Like Kerensky, Mr. Roosevelt is a pawn, not a player in the Communist game.

So far as we Americans are concerned, the real Communist menace operates mainly in two indirect ways. The first is through its influence on international relations in which we are inevitably involved: the second is through the leaven of Communism in the complex of current American ideas and attitudes. Expressed somewhat more concretely, the Communist menace for us consists of two rather distinct sets of possibilities: the first is that we shall be maneuvered

into fighting a war to further Communist interests or to help carry out a Communist plan. (This, of course, we should do in complete disregard — if not blissful ignorance — of the true implications of so suicidal a war, and in the mistaken belief that it was altogether essential to our safety and best interests.) The second set of possibilities with which we are threatened is that our New Dealers, influenced by Communist ideology, will render Capitalism unworkable and its collapse inevitable, thus precipitating exactly the kind of situation Communism requires for the successful culmination of its strategy.

The present Communist policy of attempting to secure the existing *status quo*, protect Capitalist rights, and safeguard parliamentary Democracy the world over is, of course, not a part of Communist ideology *but only of Communist strategy*. Communist ideology demands and aims at the destruction of Capitalist interests and Liberal government everywhere; but Communist strategy, when threatened by defeat at the hands of the Fascists, may indicate a temporary alliance with the Liberal Capitalist interests for the purpose of mutual defense. Communist strategy pursues the larger objectives of Com-

munist ideology by promoting war between nations, class conflict within nations, and the disintegration of the existing order. It calls for manipulation by Moscow of the present delicate balance of power between the Liberal Democracies (the Haves) and the Fascist nations (the Have-Nots) in ways to engender ill-will and war between them and, so, to insure their ultimate destruction at each other's hands. This strategy scored in Eden's play of sanctions against Italy and in President Roosevelt's Chicago speech on quarantining the wicked nations. It scored again when the prestige both of the British Tories and of the New Deal became impaired through the sequels of these foolish international plays inspired by the strategy of Moscow. In local politics, Communist strategy supports a Roosevelt against a Landon or an Eden against a Chamberlain, not as the lesser of two evils, but on the eminently-sound reasoning that the Pinker or more internationally-minded the statesman or party in power, the greater will be the resulting contribution to the disintegration of Liberal Capitalism.

Liberals who imagine that Communism and Liberalism can live together harmoniously in the same world forget that Communism

sprang from the brain of Karl Marx just when he was leading a sheltered life in London and studying Liberalism and Capitalism when they were in their soundest phase. Marx understood Liberalism better than most Liberals. *He hated it and conceived a revolutionary social philosophy aimed at its destruction.* Now that Liberal Capitalism is tottering, why suppose that the bloody oligarchs of the Kremlin have become seized with a benign and sentimental wish to preserve the objective of their traditional hate? Why attribute to gory Stalin a benignity for Liberalism opposite to the feeling of the gentle old Marx pottering around the British Museum?

A clear understanding of the subtleties and apparent contradictions of Communist ideology and strategy is imperative if the Communist menace is to be checked. For these seemingly abstract factors are shaping world events today. Mechanized armies are their instruments. Dramatized dictators are their tools. Their decisive battles are in the field of propaganda. The important victories and defeats in the struggle for survival will be those of ideals, not personalities or, even, nations. Thus, should America, France, and Britain succeed in conquering Ger-

many, Italy and Japan, but, in so doing, succumb to totalitarian dictatorships, it might be said that Hitler and Mussolini had lost, but it would have to be granted that the ideology of either Communism or Fascism had won the final victory.

II

What makes Communist ideals especially dangerous is the breadth of their appeal and the utter impossibility of their attainment. The essence of Communist ideals is social justice, industrial efficiency, and the substitution of a classless, workers' society for the national, patriotic state. As for Communist ideology, it is nothing more or less than a philosophy of war, or the class struggle, having the largest possible mass appeal. Dr. Gregory Zilboorg, a prominent psychiatrist, recently observed that three fundamental urges in human nature are narcissism, megalomania, and hostility. Communist philosophy encourages the masses to self-admiration, self-exaltation, and endless hostility. It makes a perfect social philosophy for mass-destruction and war.

The Communist ideals of a more-equal distribution of wealth and of greater productive efficiency

may not be unattainable—Capitalism made steady progress in their attainment throughout the Nineteenth Century. But a classless society is an unrealizable dream. Under the cloak of an idealism, which has appeal both for the humanitarian and the industrial engineer, the class-warfare ideology invades our thinking. Communist ideals without the class-war philosophy would be harmless wishful-thinking. It is by linking a class-war philosophy with the innocent idealism of plenty, equality, and efficiency that Communism becomes dangerous. Thus it creates a new loyalty, that of the united workers of the world, and destroys an old loyalty, that of patriotic citizens: thus it creates Communists obedient to Moscow, and destroys Americans, Englishmen, or Frenchmen loyal to their own nations. One cannot be a good American, a good Englishman, or a good Frenchman, and a good Communist at the same time. The Communist ideal makes class war indispensable for its pursuit. And class war makes national citizenship an anachronism.

Contrary to the current Liberal view of Communism, it is this Communist war-philosophy, and not its ideals of equality and plenty, which makes it a potent social

force. A social philosophy, to be dynamic and dangerous, needs only to rationalize war. War has always been, and still is, the easiest collective enterprise to sell to the masses. This fact Marx and Engels realized only too well. Out of their profound understanding of human nature was born that masterpiece of pamphleteering of all time, *The Communist Manifesto*. A philosophy which excites the entire working population to war on the owning and managing classes is far more dangerous than a philosophy which rationalizes war by one nation to win independence, territory, or special advantages. For, a people who, through war, may have won independence, territory, colonies, or trade advantages, may subsequently settle down to enjoy a prolonged period of peace during which they may consolidate the gains of their valor and industry: but Communism, as a philosophy of war, can never have such a culmination. It endows an aggregation of people with a sense of community only as long as they can be actively engaged in the enterprise of revolution. It was no mere wisecrack, but a profound observation, when a wit recently remarked that Stalin, having killed off all his enemies, has had to start in on his friends. Communists,

having rejected the unifying spiritual forces of religion, nationalism, race, and family, have nothing left to hold them together once they have won. Without a God, without a king, and without a folk-consciousness of kinship and a mystic destiny, they can only pray that each day their War God will give them their daily enemy.

Our Liberals think of Communism in terms of its ideals of abundance, efficiency, and equality rather than in terms of its ideology of an eternal Workers' war against the Capitalists. This is due, in part, to wishful thinking and, in part, to a refusal to be guided either by the Communist scriptures or the Communist record. The Liberals insist that Communism is what they would like it to be. In the case of Russia it is a noble experiment and a great and good revolution for a backward country, long in need of great social changes. In the case of France, it is merely a series of overdue labor reforms. But there is no excuse for such disregard of historical facts. The Communists do tell the truth about themselves in their ideology; though, naturally, they lie about themselves in their strategy. After all, the purpose of strategy is to deceive the enemy, whereas good proselyting propaganda operates

by arousing hostility against some one else. These are the reasons why the Communist scriptures truthfully represent Communist hate and lust for power; and why the Communist tacticians untruthfully represent Communism as a bulwark of Democracy. If the strategic claims for Communism were true, the Communist party of Russia should go into voluntary dissolution.

Communists are two-faced. One face is full of sweetness and light: this face is kept turned towards Liberal statesmen and cultural leaders from whom aid and protection is sought. The other face is full of hate and murder: this face is kept turned towards the hungry, the unemployed, and the dissatisfied whom it is desired to inflame with class hate and incite to enlistment in the Communist class war. In one direction the Communists appeal to tolerance: in the other, they appeal to hate. This is perfectly logical and consistent: it is calculated to further the Revolution and hasten the destruction of the existing order. *The only inconsistency involved is that shown by the Liberals who extend tolerance to their would-be destroyers.* As a matter of fact, any honest Communist will privately admit as much. It would be enlightening for

the Liberals to know how the Communists they are defending laugh at them disdainfully behind their backs.

The outstanding recent achievement of this Communist strategy has been the widespread dissemination of the absurd lie that Communism has abandoned World Revolution and concentrated on the building of Socialism in one country. This lie was started when the first Five Year Plan got under way. Obviously, Communism cannot be Marxian, or true to itself, without World Revolution. The difference between building Socialism in one country and building national Socialism is purely verbal; so would be the difference between Stalin and Hitler, but for Marxism and World Revolution. Communism in Russia may quite well, in the sequel to war or collapse of the Stalin regime, metamorphose into a Russian national Socialism or Fascism: but this cannot happen as long as the ideals of Marx and Lenin are revered by the oligarchs of the Kremlin.

In his letter to an obscure Communist youth, published in *Pravda* on February 14, Stalin nailed the lie about the abandonment of World Revolution. He recalled the statement by Lenin that a conflict between the Soviet Union and the

Capitalist countries was inevitable. Said Stalin: "The aid of the international proletariat appears to be a force without which the final victory of Socialism in one country is not to be decided." It is only fair to the Communists to say that this lie about abandonment of World Revolution has been told only to the infidels, and never to the faithful. It was told to Messrs. Roosevelt and Bullitt in the negotiations for American recognition, and to Mr. Eden in getting England out on a limb over the Italian war in Ethiopia. And, as a result of falling for it, both the British and the French have had to eat crow — Fascist crow and in Rome, at that — while, for the same reason Mr. Roosevelt has his own Depression to laugh off just now. For the truth about Communist principles, one had neither to delve into Marx or to wait for Stalin's encyclical of last February: one had only to observe the spirit and technique of the sit-down strike in France in 1936 or in the United States in 1937. The sit-down strike was Moscow's little way of thanking Mr. Roosevelt for recognition, and expressing gratitude to France for the Franco-Russian military alliance and the acceptance of the Popular Front Government. It was a splendid piece of Communist strategy ad-

justed to the present phase of the class struggle in America and France. The sit-down strike and an impossible wage-rate increase did more than anything else to bring on the Roosevelt Depression of 1937 which has eternally discredited American Liberalism and the New Deal. Identically the same factors have brought French prestige, the French franc, and French economy to new lows—and Hitler to new highs. For the operation of these factors and their results Messrs. Roosevelt and Blum can thank the influence of international Communism.

III

In the summer of 1936, just after the Blum Popular-Front Government came into power, I made an extensive motor tour through France, and so had innumerable opportunities to witness occupations of French factories by bands of Communist workers, who invariably flew the Communist flag and never the French flag. I frequently observed street riots in Paris in the course of which Communists beat up French civilians, women as well as men. I saw Communists tear the tricolor, the flag of France, from the clothes and hands of French men and women,

and manhandle French citizens for displaying their national emblem. I saw a French national school teacher's association pass Communist resolutions, the French public school teachers being in the large majority, Communists or Communist-sympathizers. But notwithstanding indubitable evidence such as this, reputable American printing presses today turn out an endless stream of pro-Communist propaganda.

To quote but one example, in an article entitled "The French Bourgeoisie and Communism" in the *Yale Review*, Professor Albert Guerard of Leland Stanford University writes that "it will be a great contribution to political sanity if we are allowed to forget the awful bugbear Communism, and if we substitute the milder term Socialism, which Norman Thomas has made innocuous, even respectable and which describes better the objectives of the so-called 'Communist Party' in France." (The "so-called Communist Party in France" is a member of the Communist Third International with headquarters in Moscow.) The Professor goes on to say that "to alliance with the Socialists, the French bourgeois Democrats have no theoretical objection. They have known Socialism for over a hundred years, and it

no longer makes their flesh creep.”

Shades of the French Terror of 1792 and the Paris Commune of 1871! During this last-named holocaust of blood, within the city of Paris, the total number of French, men and women, killed in battle, murdered, and executed by firing squads by other Frenchmen, within the brief period of three months, is variously estimated by different historians as being between twenty and thirty-six thousand! Little things like this, according to Professor Guerard, do not make the flesh of the French bourgeoisie creep. Just what does it take, one might ask, to faze a Liberal? Common sense and history indicate that one cannot believe Professor Guerard or the many other minimizers of Communism who write for our quality magazines.

It is historically indubitable that Communist ideals render terror necessary. Communist ideology rationalizes terror. Communist propaganda incites to terror. But Communist strategy, for the present phase of the class struggle, deliberately lies about Communist terrorism, denying that it is a fundamental principle and practice of Communism. Communist strategy further lies in pledging Communist loyalty to parliamentary and constitutional Democracy, such lies

being repudiated both by the teachings of the Communist fathers and by the current deeds of the Communist dictators. Earl Browder, Moscow's present commissar for the United States, recently stated publicly that, regardless of anything formerly written by any Communist, Communism now stands for liberty, free speech, Democracy, and constitutional government. Statements of this character would be funny, were they not being taken at face-value by our Liberal statesmen and educators; if Granville Hicks were not being called from the *New Masses* to the faculty of Harvard University to spread Communist propaganda; if our best Eastern universities were not swarming with Left-Wing exiles from Europe who are privileged here to take jobs needed by unemployed native Americans, and, at the same time, to agitate for American involvement in Popular-Front coalitions with Communist Russia. All this is likely to prove most unfortunate for responsible individuals and groups in our Eastern schools when a fully-aroused American national consciousness begins to assert itself against these betrayals of American interests and ideals.

Barring the possibilities of Fascism, Communism needs but two

conditions for success: the continuance of Capitalist decline and the continuance of Liberal tolerance for Communism. The Communists can do little directly to produce these conditions. Our Liberal leaders, however, can do everything necessary to assure them. The task of the Communists is — through their ideals, ideology, and strategy — to make the Liberal leaders work for the Communist Revolution. The Communists, it will be recalled, did nothing worth mentioning to produce the situation in 1917 which made it possible for them to seize power in Russia. The Liberals handed it to them on a platter.

The Communists have only one real worry these days and that is Fascism. For this danger, as for most others, they have a formula — a Kilkenny cat-fight between the Democracies and the Fascists. Given the continuance of the pres-

ent Liberal drift toward chaos under New Deal restrictions, persecutions, reforms, and inflationary shots in the arm; given full tolerance of subversive Communist propaganda; and, finally, given the holy war between Liberalism and Fascism — for which President Roosevelt has already issued the preliminary call in his quarantine-the-wicked-nations speech — and Communist dreams, except as to the eventual millennium, should all come true.

As it is the destruction of the existing order which gives Communism most vitality and meaning, the outlook for Communism, under the three conditions given above — all of which seem likely — is distinctly encouraging. Those who take these eventualities seriously should take Communism seriously. It is time — if it is not too late — for America to wake up to the Communist menace.



SHANGHAI PRESS CONFERENCE

BY WILLIAM PARKER

FORTY-THREE men of other than Oriental races are seated in a dimly-illuminated room facing three Japanese in civilian clothes. A certain tenseness denies their apparent nonchalance.

Forty-three pairs of eyes are focused on the three Japanese. One is tall and handsome, with a close-clipped moustache. He wears spectacles, a young college-lecturer type whose features mirror every passing emotion. He is Robert Horiguchi, 28. The second Japanese is short, round-faced, feet firmly on the carpet, a picture of combativeness. His sharp brown eyes constantly search the forty-three expressionless faces before him as though to read private thoughts. This is Lieutenant-Commander Taro Isobe, 33. The third Japanese, of medium height, is seated with his chair democratically tipped back against the wall. He rubs one hand nervously over his baldish head and brings it down his long, gloomy face to a sensitive chin, which he fingers thoughtfully. His brooding eyes gaze over the heads

of the forty-three men and mystically on beyond. He is Major Naokata Utsunomiya, 42.

The time is a few minutes past four o'clock in the afternoon, the place Shanghai, the location the mezzanine floor of the Hotel Metropole. The occasion is a Press Conference held as a diplomatic courtesy by the Imperial Japanese Navy and Army to supply all correspondents (except Japanese) with news of the progress of the undeclared Sino-Japanese war. From indefinite places outside come occasionally the heavy thud of artillery, the crash of aerial bombs, the sharp crack of naval guns.

The three Japanese on whom the forty-three reporters center their interest are, respectively, the Official Interpreter and two Official Spokesmen, one for the Imperial Japanese Navy and the other for the Imperial Japanese Army.

The Official Spokesmen hold a long colloquy in Japanese, at the conclusion of which they instruct Interpreter Horiguchi in Japanese

what to say to the press of the world in English. The two Spokesmen do not converse directly with the correspondents although before the conference they talked fluent English during informal chats.

Forty-three pencils and fountain pens are tensely poised over note paper. Several correspondents who have arranged trans-radio hook-ups to enable them to flash the news quickly to the Outside World, glance apprehensively toward the door to see that the way is clear to the telephones.

The Navy's Spokesman takes the Imperial Japanese Navy out of an inner pocket of his coat and looks it over to see what has happened since yesterday. The Imperial Japanese Navy, thus constituted, comprises two sheets of rice paper six-by-eight inches and red-bordered with Japanese ideographs. Glancing over the Spokesman's shoulder, one sees only a few perpendicular scratches of a symbolic nature, and judges there won't be much news from the Navy.

Lieutenant Commander Isobe studies his two sheets of rice paper and talks in Japanese to Interpreter Horiguchi, who then turns to the reporters and says:

"During the past twenty-four hours, the Imperial Japanese Navy along the China coast—"

A terrific explosion which feels alarmingly close to the hotel drowns out the remainder of the announcement and shakes the eleven-story building violently.

International News Service's Special Correspondent Knickerbocker addresses himself to the Interpreter:

"Are the Japanese in the Shanghai area using bigger bombs now or are they only being dropped closer than previously?"

The question is relayed in Japanese to the Official Spokesmen. They go into a long huddle. The Naval Spokesman speaks in Japanese to Interpreter Horiguchi. The Interpreter solemnly announces in English to Knickerbocker, *et al*:

"Bigger and closer."

Interpreter Horiguchi then relates generalities covering naval operations on the China coast. That clears up the Imperial Japanese Navy until the next Press Conference, tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

II

Now it is the turn of the Official Spokesman for the Imperial Japanese Army. Major Utsunomiya gives his baldish head a final massage and takes the Imperial Japanese Army from the upper right-

hand pocket of his vest. It is a red-covered notebook about five-by-three inches. The official information was written down in the notebook by an acrobat during rehearsals, and in deciphering it the Spokesman is forced to various simian gymnastics. Major Utsunomiya reads something in Japanese from the notebook to the Official Interpreter.

"Eight engineers of the Imperial Japanese Army," announces Interpreter Horiguchi, "made themselves into human torpedoes at the siege of the walled city of Paoshan. They scaled the forty-foot wall with forty-eight bombs, destroyed the wall, and escaped uninjured. Officers watching them said they climbed the wall just like monkeys."

"Just like what?" asks the Chicago *Daily News*' Sweetland, hand cupped to ear.

"Just like monkeys," repeats the Interpreter.

"That's what I thought you said," says Sweetland, making notes on his pad.

"That's what I thought I did say," retorts the Interpreter. "Just like monkeys."

"I heard you the second time," says Sweetland, looking up from his notes. "'Just like monkeys.'"

The two Official Spokesmen go

into conference. Shortly the problem becomes too great for the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Imperial Japanese Army to solve, and they call several Japanese diplomats into the conference. The reporters relax, light cigarettes, draw caricatures, shift restlessly.

One of the Special Correspondents, waiting hopefully for an idea to come out of the conference, gazes through the window and lets his eyes come to rest on the *U. S. S. Augusta* in the Whangpoo, two blocks away. Several reporters glance toward him and believe they can read his thoughts. They believe he is recalling to himself the achievements of such adventurous journalists as Richard Harding Davis, Frederick Palmer, Sir Percival Philip. The mooning Special Correspondent appears to be wishing for those other days, when generals invited newspapermen to the battlefields to watch valorous soldiers in action.

The reporters see the Special Correspondent look at his watch. They deduce from his expression that he is not looking forward with anticipation to the Chinese Army Press Conference at six o'clock, way out in the French Concession. There will be jasmine tea in delicate opalescent porcelain cups and colorful pastries on pretty Canto-

nese plates and small squares of chicken and ham sandwiches — and synthetic news, as here.

The three-sided huddle of the Navy and Army Spokesmen and the Japanese diplomats breaks up and Interpreter Horiguchi speaks to the press.

“In behalf of Major Naokata Utsunomiya, Official Spokesman for the Imperial Japanese Army, I am asked to announce in behalf of the Imperial Japanese Army — ”

The sentence has become a trifle complicated. He stops and starts again:

“I am instructed formally to deny Chinese reports that the Imperial Japanese Army has resumed mass executions on the Island of Formosa.”

The Official Spokesman for the Imperial Japanese Army beams self-righteously. The *Berliner Tageblatt's* rotund, thick-lensed correspondent gestures a pencil at the Interpreter, asking:

“Was the word *resumed*?”

Horiguchi replies:

“The word was *resumed* but the fact as stated was *not resumed*.”

The *China Press'* tubby Alcott speaks up:

“Are we to understand then that on previous occasions, the Imperial Japanese Army has carried out

mass executions of Chinese on the Island of Formosa?”

As chief of the English section of the Japanese official news agency, Domei, in Shanghai, Interpreter Horiguchi knows that the *China Press* is the literary butler to China's Minister of Finance, Dr. H. H. Kung.

“We are stating facts here,” side-steps Horiguchi, “and any journalist who desires to do so is at liberty to interpret them as he sees fit.”

Loose talk has been going about for some time that the American Ambassador to China is pro-Japanese. So that, when the Interpreter starts off: “Mr. Nelson T. Johnson, Japan's Ambassador to China —” the Special Correspondent who has been gazing at the *Augusta* down in the river, suddenly shifts his interest back to the Press Conference, and a ripple of suppressed laughter sweeps the room.

“Mr. Nelson T. Johnson, *America's* Ambassador to China,” corrects the Interpreter, “has been notified that full protection will be afforded American nationals in affected areas.”

The gaze of the Special Correspondent wanders back to the *Augusta*.

The Army's Spokesman reads aloud in Japanese from the inexhaustible little red book, Inter-

preter Horiguchi listening with a tender smile. Horiguchi speaks:

"On the Lotien front, officers of the Imperial Japanese Army, in searching the dead body of a young Chinese lieutenant, found a letter he had written to his sweetheart in the village of Nanyang. He had enclosed \$15 and said he would come soon to visit her. Officers of the Imperial Japanese Army put a note in the envelope, together with his letter, saying he died courageously in action. The letter was then sent along to the sweetheart."

The announcement is followed by a pontifical pause.

Horiguchi is given additional information from the red book. He speaks again:

"The Imperial Japanese Army announced to you several days ago that the Chinese were using sneezing gas against soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Liuhong sector. The Official Spokesman for the Chinese forces has told the local press and yourselves that the Japanese were sneezing because they had cold feet. We have a sworn certificate here from an army doctor that the throat of an ordinance officer who was in the fighting was completely swollen."

"Was what?" asks the Associated Press.

"Was completely swollen."

No one asks to see the certificate, so they skip on to the next item.

III

"Quite a number of soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army out in the Woosung area have lost their taste for tomatoes —"

The Interpreter smiles broadly as he looks at *The Press of the World*.

"They didn't know that the re-treating Chinese soldiers had entwined land-mine wires with the tomato vines."

Nothing more is added by way of explanation.

"What then?" the *New York Herald Tribune's* Keen would like to know.

"When they pulled at the tomatoes they exploded the land mines," explains the Interpreter.

"But what happened?" questions the *Reuter's* Agency man.

"They were blown to pieces," says the Interpreter.

"You mean the men or the tomatoes were blown to pieces?" questions *le Journal de Changhai* (French).

"The soldiers."

"How many?" asks *Reuter's*.

"Quite a number."

"But can't you say approximately how many?" insists *Reuter's*.

"The Imperial Japanese Army doesn't know exactly how many, but all of the soldiers who went into the fields and pulled at tomatoes exploded land mines and were blown to pieces."

The Army and Navy Spokesmen and the Interpreter and the Japanese diplomats all laugh aloud. Only The Press of the World is silent.

The afternoon Press Conference of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Imperial Japanese Army is then adjourned for the day. The Navy's Official Spokesman folds up the Imperial Japanese Navy, and the Army's Official Spokesman puts the Imperial Japanese Army back into the upper right-hand pocket of his vest.

Correspondents saunter out to

write the news of the undeclared Sino-Japanese war for their newspapers and news associations far across the seas, while some pause to look at war maps spread out on a table.

Two Special Correspondents who have stayed on hoping for an idea, approach the Army Spokesman:

"What are the chances for that trip to the front-line to see some real fighting?" the Special Correspondents ask the Spokesman in English.

"We will see what can be done," replies the Spokesman, also in English.

"But you told us that last week," say the Special Correspondents.

"We are still seeing about it," replies the Spokesman.



IF AMERICA GOES FASCIST

BY WILLIAM YANDELL ELLIOTT

ARE the chaotic times we live in due to sun spots, or to a Spenglerian Decline of the West, or to the pitiful inadequacy of human beings to cope with the magic gifts of science? I do not profess to know. But it is certain that our minds are becoming accustomed to strange questions, and to even stranger answers. One of these questions is assuming proportions rather more substantial than the boggy of Mr. Roosevelt as Caesar. It is this: Will the trend of Fascism some day cross the North Atlantic and take root on our shores? Is it a fatal phenomenon of the age — a National Socialism that necessarily plans the old Libertarian world of our present capitalism out of existence? If it should come to the United States, what form might it take?

In both Italy and Germany, which are our observable laboratories for the natural history of Fascism, the movement had common characteristics. It appeared out of the chaos which resulted from a many-party system of par-

liamentarianism that blocked effective national action. It arose from a national humiliation stupidly imposed by the Allied victors and came into power on the ruins of the failure of radically-Socialist labor movements to organize workable governments. It posed as the enemy of Bolshevism, and was therefore mistaken by finance capitalism, the big industrialists, and a sizable part of the middle-class population as the savior of capitalism. To Big Business it promised a disciplined labor supply; to the Forgotten Man it promised national security and a protection like that of the army, with regular food and pay-days.

Enough of the inner history of the post-war years is now known to make it certain that Big Business in both countries turned the trick for the Fascist and Nazi triumphs. But the middle class furnished recruits for the Storm-Troopers. Generous subsidies to Mussolini from Italian bankers and industrialists were paralleled by Hitler's salvation, at the low ebb

of Nazi fortunes, through enormous contributions from German heavy industry, and even—it is credibly alleged—from the French *Comité des Forges*. In the presidential elections in the Reich, the Nazis obtained some fifteen million marks to back Hitler—substantially double the funds of all other parties, though the Nazi voting strength was far smaller.

Today the rift in the German camp is wider than that indicated by the recent shake-up in the Army. The industrialists are discovering what Nazi protection is like. They get disciplined labor at low wages. But they cannot make their own plans or set their own policies or run their own factories. Never, except in Soviet Russia, has bureaucratic control over every operation been pushed so far. Every act is subjected to a mass of inspections and permissions. The whole country has been dragged back into war-time economy under commissars, with rationing of foods and raw materials, compulsory use of substitute products, subsidies for exports, inspectors, regulations, and paper-work everywhere. It is like the New Deal gone mad.

What Mussolini has done in Italy by taking over the banks and all heavy industries, during the

Ethiopian campaign, the Nazis have done piecemeal in Germany. The post-war governments in Germany had been pushed far in this direction by inflation, reparations, and depression before the Nazis came to power. The banks were already dependent upon the Reich for their whole credit structure, and were subject to any control that the government desired to put on. Bankruptcy had, under Dr. Brüning's chancellorship, forced several of the largest steel concerns to accept government participation in a controlling block of shares. The Nazis, though they gave up direct control, adopted the simpler expedient of forcing the banks, the insurance companies, and all the big industries to absorb ever-increasing amounts of short-term Reich loans. The process may be summed up in the words that Professor Goldschmidt used to describe Italy in 1934:

Growing net consumption, growing debts, and growing burdens result in the opposite of a planned economy. *The consequence is centralized anarchic bankruptcy.*

A few months ago the heads of those very heavy industries which put Hitler into power are credibly alleged to have come to their new master, Göring, and said that they could absorb no more State-obliga-

tions. They were enjoying a profitless prosperity, though operating at about 110 to 115 per cent of normal capacity (measured in 1928 terms). Unless State assistance were forthcoming, they claimed, they could not avoid bankruptcy. But they were no longer dealing with Dr. Schacht, who was so complacently full of endless ingenuities in bilking foreign creditors and other German industries for their sake. Göring is said to have informed them, in the manner appropriate to their own particular *Führer*, that they would go on as before, or he would take them over—kicking out the present owners and managers.

That is the answer of Fascism to every such complaint: "You can't quit. If you try to do so, you will simply lose all your property and be purged in whatever degree your sabotage seems to demand." That was Hitler's answer to the demands of Von Fritsch and the old-line generals. As there is no escape, industrialists must learn to love their chains. That is the meaning of the delivery from Bolshevism which Naziism has bestowed.

The essence of the system may be simply put: Under Fascism and Naziism alike, there is no longer any real freedom of private investment. The State controls all capi-

tal. In effect, the capital levies which Mussolini puts into effect without disguise (five of them since 1931, and the last two almost within the year, of five per cent on real estate and ten per cent on all corporate wealth that was get-at-able) have also been applied in Germany through forcing ever greater subscriptions to the Reich loans. Price-control operates so rigidly in the retail sphere that the smaller tradesmen have been bankrupted by the hundred thousand. All German business is now bigger, more concentrated, completely cartelized, subject to price control, and run by compulsion of the State.

II

What has happened in Germany and Italy shows the natural history of the Fascist economic order: first, the use of Fascism by Big Business; then the turning of the servant upon the master, with an exchange of roles. Every Fascist system must plan as for war. Such planning destroys all the reality of private property, because it takes back with one hand what it gives with the other.

Suppose Fascism should find a future foothold on our soil? It is certain that American business

and American Fascism, whatever its guise, would not merely repeat European history. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that a government which genuinely aimed at avoiding Fascism, might under pressure of a war strain assume a Fascist temper. Or it might, less conceivably, follow something of the pattern which Sinclair Lewis' impressionistic brush painted in *It Can't Happen Here*. In any case, the essential nature of Fascism would make it a hard master for American business.

A Fascist régime is marked by the leadership of a strong man, skilled in mass demagoguery, appealing for national unity, supported by a ruthless body of followers who club all opposition in the name of law, order, and national discipline. Once in the saddle, it must hold power by coercing every activity into its control, and by suppressing the *appearance* of class, sectional, or religious conflict. On the rise it is opportunistic, all things to all men. But in power it is necessarily collectivistic and repressive to all free play of economic interests. Its political solutions will be made in terms of the strongest group of its political backers — to *that* degree it, too, responds to pressures. And it must

appease mass opinion by domestic scapegoats if foreign enemies won't serve.

The logic of events in Italy and Germany appears to mean that the more Socialistic or National Bolshevik element in the party may be purged in the early stages, for getting too far out of hand. This way went Farinacci's kind in Italy, and Röhm and his cohorts in Germany. But as the haphazard planning of State-capitalism in this stage of merely low-wage, government favoritism to big industry results in bankruptcy (since it kills purchasing power and increases price rigidity), the Socialist element in the party ultimately gets revenge. Big Business becomes the prisoner of the régime. Mussolini is obviously courting labor support today, and Hitler turns always more in that direction.

What would such a turn of the wheel bring to business in the United States? One very significant feature of Fascism everywhere is that, even more than the democracies, it has to bribe the farmers. It can force them to plant what the government decrees, but it has to pay high prices to get them to deliver. This means that the cost of living can be kept down — which a Fascist régime always regards as essential — only by forcing control

of retail prices. It is like the AAA without the immediate possibility of passing the processing taxes on to consumers. Price-fixing in this area was first enforced, in both Italy and Germany, simply through local intimidation of merchants by Party committees of visitation. Soon it was enforced by legions of officials. The German League for the Defense of the Middle Class was suppressed and the merchants were forced to take low profits or none, until bankruptcy thinned their ranks to a fraction.

The inevitable tendency of Fascist control appears to carry this stage through by increasing the concentration of industry and business in general. The type of small businessman who recently (and by invitation) swarmed to Washington to air his grievances has been the backbone of Fascism abroad, in its revolutionary phase. Ironically, he has been one of its earliest victims. He goes under because Fascism, by increasing his fixed costs and taxes and keeping down his prices, aids the ruthless weeding out of the small-capital firms. They cannot stand the pressure. They succumb under mountains of red tape and inspections. Party dues add the last straw. So it would be here. So it would have

been in some degree under the NRA had General Johnson really been in the position that the Fascist is to crack down. Instead, under our inefficiently administered democracy, it was NRA that broke down from lack of being enforceable.

Big Business fares much better at first. It employs so many people, and its leaders are so much more powerful under any régime, that it gets special favors at the expense of the rest of the system. It is also easier to control by bureaucratic methods and therefore a more suitable instrument of the Corporate State.

In this country we have for several years been regaled with the Berle and Means thesis about the two hundred corporations which controlled nearly fifty per cent of our industrial wealth in 1930 and are today alleged to control sixty per cent. If we allow the revisions of the Twentieth-Century Fund's inquiry into giant corporations, the number having a capital of fifty millions or more runs to just short of six hundred, and they do control probably fifty to sixty per cent of our incorporated industrial assets. Under Fascism in the United States, in whatever guise it might come, this concentration would certainly increase. For where Fas-

cism, under the spur of the usual State-capitalist bankruptcy, began its positive planning, concentration would be forced, as it has been forced in both Germany and Italy. Gone the "wasteful" multiplication of corner groceries, drugstores, and gasoline stations. Competition in every area would give way to planning in national units.

And here the woes of Big Business begin. Fascism, like every oligarchic autocracy, responds to pressures. The first pressure is to reward its Party members with places. Mr. Farley's version of the New Deal patronage would make any proper American Fascist wonder at his moderation. In a country unused to the restraining traditions of a Civil Service which is beyond the reach of spoils, and with an increase in governmental posts (of which the NRA and Social Security may be taken as giving only a faint hint as to possibilities), the burden of new officials that would have to be borne by business would be staggering. Even without the enormous increases in the costs of naval, military, police, and special forces, or the probability of imperialist armament programs, Fascism always spends the budget to death. It "cures" unemployment by making nearly half the population depend upon State expendi-

ture — of course decreasing the actual living standards of the entire population. That means more taxes. As there is a limit to what consumers can bear, especially under a Fascist wage policy, Fascism spells *real confiscation* for Big Business. Of course it may coat the pill by continuing to allow business to be operated (under control) by present managers — so long as they cause no trouble.

In this matter of pressures, it is also well to remember that while Fascism substitutes army methods for our present honest-graft system of fiscal control in local units, it substitutes also control by an inner hierarchy that will punish enemies just as it rewards friends. Struggles like those for control of the American railway systems would be fought out, not as once they were in the piping days of land piracy through the stock market and financial manipulation, but through the inner cabals of those who could get the Leader's ear. The pressures of cameral groups, complicated by sectionalism, and by the revolutionary sabotage which Fascism would certainly encounter in this broad and varied land, do not give an attractive picture of security for business, big or little.

In other words, suppose that

Jesse Jones was running a Fascist Department of Economic Co-ordination, instead of being the honest banker that he is, doing a great public job. For a time he might persuade his Leader to play ball with the gentlemen of the Liberty League and the rest. But like Dr. Schacht, he would soon have to give way to a Göring who would crack down with all the power that control over credit, federal licensing, regimented labor, and fifty-seven varieties of taxation, rationing, raw-material quotas, and price-fixing would give him. That is what the American businessman could expect from Fascism.

III

In the course of my duties with the Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce, I have met many representative businessmen. It is a pleasure to report that I have yet to find one who is looking for a Mussolini or a Hitler to lead him by the hand. The American businessman is not looking for Fascism, as some businessmen in France still did a year ago. That way lies a slavery beyond the worst that the most dyed-in-the-wool Wall Streeter has ever predicted from the New Deal. If Big Business has been scourged by the New

Deal with whips, then scorpions is an inadequate word to describe what would be the ultimate instrument for scourging under Fascism. And our businessmen have seen with their own eyes, or heard from cronies abroad, just how Fascist planning works out—moving further toward national Bolshevism with each jump.

It would be well to remember too that such jumps would probably come faster in this country. We are further along the road to planning, and the state of the world does not permit the alternatives of orthodox economic salvation—gold standard, freer trade, foreign lending, and so on. More than that, a Fascism which had any chance of power in this country would have to carry a wide comet's tail of the lunatic fringe if it were to escape another Civil War in its march to power. Labor is much more genuinely organized and powerful in this country than anywhere except in England. And the kind of labor support that would even possibly back incipient Fascism in this country would be bent on nationalization and collectivism at an early stage.

Fascism comes in various guises, but always as a receiver in bankruptcy. The bankruptcy is most obvious in the economic sphere,

but it betrays a more fundamental failure—the breakdown of a nation's faith in its institutions. The hunger for a savior, which the hard-headed businessman thinks to turn to his own ends, is all the more dangerous because it comes from desperation—the despair of little men whose days are not busy. The lost and disoriented, to whom modern industrialism furnishes neither jobs nor joy, are hungry for the opiate of dreams of grandeur, and the support of great mass demonstrations.

Fortunately Fascism comes from the weakness, not the power of democratic government. In this country we do not suffer from a national sense of humiliation, imposed upon us from without. Our national resources have, up to this time, cushioned us against drastic results from business stagnation. We do not suffer as yet the deep sense of futility that comes from being supplied with too many leaders marching in opposite direc-

tions, or from a government that cannot head in any direction whatever.

But the growth of pressure-politics, of special privileges to all, of stalemates in our political separation of powers, and above all of the chronic disorder of industrial disputes in labor relations—these are ominous signs. It may be that our mass enjoyment of baseball and professional sports, and our inoculation to propaganda by radio and movies, will protect us from the hunger for circuses. But no one has yet arisen in political circles to suggest that the public dispensing of bread can be altered.

Yet sooner or later the pinch of public credit will take us into this dangerous region. If the way out that is chosen lies along the familiar lines of Fascism, businessmen may be advised that their day of even relative freedom is done. Fascist discipline tramps upon the very hands that lift it to power.



THREE-RING CIRCUS FOR MORONS

BY ALBERT L. BELL

MORE million-dollar high schools, and more indolent pupils to fill them, is the present panacea for our existing educational ills. It is taken for granted that everyone between the ages of six and sixteen must annually doze through 180 days of school for a period of twelve years. What happens to the child's head while his posterior is being supported is of secondary importance.

Education is the greatest enterprise we have today. It has a capitalization of \$10,000,000,000, and employs 1,500,000 persons who teach 30,000,000 people at a yearly cost of \$2,500,000,000. In 1890, \$14.20 was spent per pupil. This increased to \$16.41 in 1900, \$26.99 in 1910, \$53.52 in 1920, and \$86.70 in 1930. Today we are spending six times more than we did in 1890. Are we accomplishing six times as much? Are the present graduates six times better able to think and act for themselves than the graduates of 1890? The answer would be laughter—if the overburdened taxpayer could still laugh.

Unless the present generation is composed exclusively of geniuses and prodigies, it seems hardly sensible that everyone up to the age of eighteen should have a conglomerate mixture of dubious information poured down his throat under the false assumption that the operation will produce a generation of profound thinkers. This trend is apparent when we realize that the enrollment in public high schools increased 100% from 1920 to 1930 while the total population increased only 16½%. Everyone knows that the innate intelligence could hardly have increased 83½% in those ten years. This means that we are now compelling a constantly-increasing number of subnormals, who can not derive any benefit from higher education, to fritter away their time at public expense. We are investing millions of dollars in the moron, while the brilliant child is frustrated by an educational system geared to the feeble-minded.

The increasing emphasis placed upon education is of course confined to buildings, athletic contests,

concerts, and social functions. There is practically no interest in what actually goes on in the classrooms. The average taxpayer has never observed a class in session, and consequently has no conception as to how we are pouring millions down these magnificent rat holes every year. He is unaware that today we measure results in school not by what a pupil has learned, but by the number of days that he has warmed a seat, the number of courses that he has been exposed to, and by the number of classes that he has drowsed through. For the taxpayer's edification, let us take an inventory of what actually goes on in the average high school during a normal day.

II

In the morning a large part of the student body arrives thirty or forty minutes prior to the convening of classes in order to get out of some work at home or get into some trouble at school. Some remain in the Home Room and heckle the few students who are trying to work; others amuse themselves by running, fighting, and shrieking in the halls. The girls spend their time in plastering on an additional coating of powder, rouge, and lipstick

which their mothers would not allow them to do at home; by the time classes assemble they look like circus clowns and smell like prostitutes going to a picnic. Newly-infatuated couples seek the dark and secluded corners as well as the rear seats in the auditoriums to neck and fondle until the bell sounds.

After the Bible has been perfunctorily read and the Lord's Prayer aimlessly mumbled, the students pass to their classes, laboratories, shops, or home economic rooms. In the first class, if the lecture method is used, the students go into a state of reverie or day-dreaming, to be aroused only by the first bell which is the signal to get the books piled and to ask a neighbor what the next class is. After agreeing to the next class, the newly-awakened seat-warmers wonder whether there was an assignment, to which the others reply, "I guess not—anyway I didn't do anything." Then the second bell rings and, after the new assignment for this class has fallen on deaf ears, the ne'er-do-wells mope to the next room.

Here the teacher may use the question-and-answer method. In a class of thirty-five, after a pupil has answered and his zero has been indelibly tucked away in the record book, he may become oblivious to

everything for at least twenty minutes (the only requirement being that he refrain from snoring while asleep).

Those enrolled in language courses such as Latin, French, German, and Spanish resort to every artifice in order to pass. In a course in Virgil or Cicero every pupil has a trot for each book or oration. Not content to use these trots as an aid to translation, the students either copy verbatim into the text, or remove the necessary sheets from the trot and read from them if, when, and as called upon. If in the Latin course, there are sentences to be done, usually about six out of a class of twenty-five actually do them and the remainder copy them. Most of the class-room time is spent in putting mustaches on Caesar, Virgil, and Cicero, and pipes, cigarettes, and cigars into the mouths of Juno, Venus, and Minerva.

In practically all high schools we have history-of-music or music-appreciation courses in which everyone must do a project, write a term-paper, or keep a notebook. The majority of the pupils simply write to Deems Taylor (commentator for the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra's Sunday afternoon broadcasts) or some other music critic and ask for facts, dates,

statistics, personal opinions, and biographies concerning famous composers. Virtually everything that pupils want to know could be obtained if they weren't too lazy to spend an hour with the encyclopedia. But the writing of begging letters to celebrities is not only permitted but is actually encouraged by teachers who give extra credit if the information is signed by the commentator or critic himself. This and similar work in other courses is becoming a national educational racket, as the unfortunate gentlemen who are swamped with illiterate letters will testify.

During laboratory periods in chemistry, home economics, or similar courses the pupils can appear busy when the instructor walks by, and the remainder of the time are free to talk over last night's dates, make plans for the ensuing dance, or play with the gadgets and machines. In the science courses it isn't necessary to accomplish very much because the results can be easily copied from someone else's data book. The home economics girls resort to any trick to escape duty, because in the end Mother makes the dress, slip, or apron at home anyway.

Some of the new teaching schemes and devices such as workbooks, practice sets, projects, con-

tracts, and other current pedagogical whims not only encourage loafing, but make it more enjoyable. If the class is fortunate enough to have workbooks, there is little teaching and less thinking, because all that is required is to fill in the blanks from the material in the text or some other student's workbook. Practice sets in bookkeeping are always fun, because it gives an opportunity to enhance the pupil's repertoire of dirty jokes while supposedly consulting various members of the class about accrued interest or some other fictitious difficulty. Almost everyone enjoys projects because that allows adequate time to play, inasmuch as an older brother or sister can usually be persuaded to construct the Eskimo settlement, build the covered wagon, or whittle out the wooden Indians.

III

There has been a recent trend toward the use of many visual and auditory aids, such as the movies and radio programs, in order to pacify these motley groups of "scholars". Inasmuch as the showing of movies requires a dark room, the students usually sleep or engage in amorous antics during the picture because they are seldom held

accountable for anything that is shown. Radio programs are often resorted to by teachers who are either too lazy or too dull to hold the interest of the class. About the only outcome of both these programs, either direct associate, or concomitant, is that the pupils' respective posterior ends have been completely anaesthetized.

During study periods, confusion and entertainment is provided by bringing in white rats, turtles, and dogs which are allowed to scamper up and down the aisles. At frequent intervals there are spasmodic epidemics of coughing, humming, and stamping of feet which provide an atmosphere similar to the schizophrenical ward in a mental hospital. If talking is permitted the students discuss everything from sex to perpetual motion (but not much of it is perpetual motion except the talking). In case talking is prohibited the girls gaze at their artificial faces in their respective mirrors, comb and push their periodically-frizzed wigs, and manicure their crimson finger nails: the boys sit and stare at books and watch the clock. Various couples who are not permitted to sit together generally go to the library and select, in addition to the funny papers, magazines that have pictures at which they gaze long and

dreamily, so as not to finish before the period ends.

This educational scourge of indolence which seems to be prevalent throughout the entire system, reaches its culmination during activity period. In most of our high schools, activity periods are loaf periods for the majority of the students. A few go to the library and serve their time. Some of the boys sign up for a scheduled activity and then go to the drug store, gas station, or beer joint where they may smoke unmolested so long as they report back at the required time. Others loiter in the cloak room, shower rooms, gymnasium, auditorium, and other corners not frequented by teachers and principals. These gatherings provide an

excellent opportunity to exchange sex booklets and lascivious pictures which are the common property of a vast number; to gather sex knowledge, which is usually misleading and always vulgar; and to compare sex experiences and promote sexual promiscuity. The remaining students stay in the home-room, half-heartedly passing the time away by drawing caricatures of the various members of the faculty.

At the close of the day the pupils go to the drug store, or to the pool hall, or even home, with the feeling that they have succeeded in supinely frittering away another day. And the taxpayer reaches deeper into his purse to pay for the three-ring circus for morons.



CHASTITY ON THE CAMPUS

By A Co-Ed

EVERY third magazine nowadays contains an article on the case for chastity. Since there is a case *for* chastity, it follows that there must be a case *against* chastity. I believe that at least seventy-five per cent of college girls are not virgins. I am not one myself. I want to give you our point of view.

I am an undergraduate at one of the largest universities in the United States. Probably I am typical of the average co-ed. I am a sorority girl, take a small part in campus activities, receive average grades, and am fairly popular. Along with other average students, I am pretty annoyed at the inaccurate stereotypes that modern writers give us, and at the gullibility with which the public swallows them. We do not look on college as a place for fun alone; we are appreciative of the privilege of a higher education, and seriously awed at the responsibility of amounting to something. To most of us girls, college is not a matrimonial bureau, but a preparation primarily to teach us to learn to live the fullest life, and, if desirable, to

support ourselves. We are as interested in a home and family as our parents were, the chief difference being that we have moved forward the year at which a girl is labelled an old maid. We are as interested in moral values as the next person, perhaps a little more. We are critical of dishonesty, superficiality, and laziness. Most of us have vigorous personal moral codes which we honestly try to live up to.

Our mothers had their moral codes neatly outlined for them. It didn't occur to them to question such a long-accepted truth as, "Live according to the Ten Commandments and you will live right." But we have been trained in a different school. We have learned to look more critically at long-accepted truths, and some we throw out along with the belief that "night air" is bad for one. The professors, contrary to popular belief, do not stand up and say, "Ha-ha, there isn't any God." They don't even tell us there isn't any Santa Claus. They teach us the technique of thinking. Our conclusions are our own.

The reading public has a lot of false imagery about us, but in one thing it is right. The majority of us are not virgins. That is not a startling statement. Almost everybody has read that somewhere. But how many writers follow up that statement with the modification that we are not promiscuous? Perhaps some writers do, but none that I have read. The point is important. It is for many of us the difference between immorality and morality . . . the difference between self-respect and shame.

And that self-respect is important to us. If most of us felt that intercourse before marriage were a violation of our codes of personal integrity, we would have none of it. For we show surprising evidences of strength of character, considering the giddy puppets we are supposed to be. Ours is a virtuous standard, highly critical and frankly disgusted by many of the attitudes and practises of the older generation. The reason we do not wait for marriage to experience sexual relationships is not that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" — for the flesh of young college people is surprisingly strong. When we are physically tempted we think, "Here is a hunger which I feel; shall I satisfy it?" Some of us answer "Yes", others, "No". But

the situation is tested pretty thoroughly by our thought processes before we come to a conclusion. Those of us who answer "No" do so because we decide that the arguments in the many articles on "The Case for Chastity" are right, or because of religious bonds, or fear, or any number of reasons. Those of us who answer "Yes" do so because we discard all those reasons as examples of emotional and erroneous thinking, because we feel that we have a need for a physical relationship which is right and healthy, and that this need should be satisfied.

We know that, because we have chosen to delay our earning capacity long enough to obtain an education, we must therefore legally wait longer for the sex life that is normal in the human animal. We believe that the desire for intercourse is a natural, normal, healthy instinct. In our studies of the social sciences, we have seen disastrous consequences in the lives of many people because of incomplete and unsatisfactory sexual adjustment. We have read the doctrines of Freud for what they are worth. Some we have discarded; some we have accepted. But in the one respect that he is most criticized, we agree with him. We do not believe that he over-emphasizes sex, for his

contemporaries in other schools also say that inadequate sex life is the most important cause of neurosis. If we give this argument to our parents, they reply that only those a little weak mentally succumb under the strain of unsatisfactory sex life. But we feel that the line between sanity and insanity is a tenuous one, and the best way to avoid crossing over is by the healthiest, soundest living, mental and physical, that we can achieve.

II

When we have thus stated to ourselves the arguments for immediate sexual relationships, we begin to look at the question from the other side—the advantages of remaining celibate, and the dangers of not doing so. One of the first points that the many articles suggest is that the woman who “gives in” will never have a happy married life; that if she tells her husband, he will not respect her; and that if she doesn’t, she will be made unhappy by her own deceit. Except in rare cases, this implies the double standard of morals. And college students scoff at the double standard. They consider it a pretty good joke that men put over on women. A generation or more ago, most “nice” women admitted that they

wanted children, but to admit a need for intercourse in public or private was positively indecent. And so, unconsciously capitalizing on this attitude, men built up the idea that they had the greater need for sexual experience. A man might be excused for not being faithful to his wife on the grounds that for one reason or another his wife did not physically satisfy him, but the excuse simply did not hold for women. A woman was faithful to her husband or she was “fallen”. But psychologists have taught us that men as a class do not have more need or desire for intercourse than women. Most college students accept this fact and discard the fetish that men must be satisfied while women must be virtuous.

Forty fraternity boys on our campus were discussing the kind of wives they wanted. Not one of them would marry a girl whom he believed to be dishonest, but only one demanded virginity in his bride! Since most of us girls expect to marry college graduates, or their intellectual equivalents, that is an answer. It means to us that our husbands will probably be among the large majority of boys who feel this way. And we wouldn’t want a husband who did not or could not be made to feel that way. For to us, the idea that the bride

must be a virgin is another example of emotionalism. Woman's place in our generation is on a level with her husband, not on an artificially-elevated pedestal.

Perhaps one reason that we have reached these conclusions is that we don't have much respect for the marriage ceremony itself. We feel that neither God nor our honor is very much concerned with our legal license and the jumbled words which someone mutters to us. It is not this that makes a sex relationship morally right or wrong. If we personally feel that we can have intercourse before marriage without cheapening or degrading ourselves, then it does not interfere with our sense of personal integrity. Since most of us look on the sex drive as a physical drive comparable to hunger, a drive that needs satisfaction, we feel that we may relieve that need without lowering our moral standards. But if we were to accept that definition and disregard the psychological complications, we should be guilty of grave error. At this point we slow up, and move with extra caution.

We know that the danger of "getting caught" is practically negligible with the intelligent use of contraceptives. Some of us believe in abortion, if necessary; others do

not. But though the danger of becoming pregnant does not frighten us any more than the idea that we may someday be in a train accident, we are genuinely afraid of "getting caught" in another way. Intercourse we recognize as a form of supreme intimacy; and we know that that same feeling of intimacy frequently results in a strong feeling of possession. Let me illustrate by a specific example, the case history of Mary and John, which is full of universal problems for college students who have to make a choice on the question of chastity.

Mary says to herself, "Here is John, a boy whom I believe I love very much and will always love. I also believe that he has the same feeling toward me. We plan to marry some day, but that day is a long way off, for I must first earn enough money to pay back what I borrowed while in school, and he has three years left in medical college before he can even start to practise. While we are together, we are made unhappy by a natural urge which we have stimulated by our affection for each other. The result is that both of us have been nervous, cross, and dissatisfied. We cannot go on this way much longer. Either we must have intercourse, or our affection for

each other will be lost. The nervous strain is too great.

"Now if I do not have intercourse with him, it will probably mean the end of our love, which is something I am unwilling to give up. On the other hand, if I do yield to this impulse, what will be the results? How will I feel if John decides to leave me? By that time I will have become accustomed to intercourse and will need it. I shall feel that I have a claim on him, but it will not be one that I can make. Marriage would give me security in this way, which I must risk getting along without."

This last idea Mary dismisses quickly, for college girls do not think of marriage as a contract with which either party can force the other, through threats of legal recourse, to play square. Then she considers another aspect of the question. "Suppose we find each other sexually incompatible?" But the answer is apparent to her at once—it is better to discover this flaw before marriage than after.

Finally, Mary's mind turns to a more far-sighted view of the question. "Though John and I may have a satisfying relationship during my last year in college, I wonder what will happen when I am away nine months of the year teaching school in a small town

while he continues to work for his degree in medicine?"

She decides that there is a strong chance that she and John will never marry. And she wonders what the consequences will be. After thinking it over, she decides that at first it may be a psychological shock to her, but infinitely less painful than the prolonged period of repressed living that she and John are experiencing.

So Mary decides in the end that probably both she and John will be happier for having had the experience. It will take sexual experience out of the realm of the great unknown. It will give them a year of happy intimate living together. And finally, when the wound of failure has healed, they will be able to look back on their relationship realistically—not wistfully as on a dream that "might have been". If their relationship does not end in marriage, she decides that there is little of real importance lost, and that much will have been gained. Probably both of them will make more successful partners in a future marriage for having had the experience.

The hypothetical case of Mary and John is just one case, but it covers many aspects of the problem which faces every couple in love on a university campus.

III

Psychological statistics show that when the man and woman have had intercourse with other persons before marriage, there is a better chance that the marriage will be a successful one. The technique of successful living sexually, as well as in other ways, is one that needs to be learned. Sometimes one teacher is not enough.

We students do not, however, rush in with the abandon of one thoughtlessly seeking pleasant sensation. We do not yield in a moment of drunkenness, as the pulp magazines would have us. And though we may have intercourse with more than one boy in a period of four years, most of us do not, because we have been careful — almost as careful as if we were considering marriage — in our choice of a boy. We are certain that we love and respect each other, and that seems to be the most important question.

Those few of us who have intercourse with more than one boy usually do so without marriage in mind, but with a demand of mutual respect. Probably we do this because we do not intend to marry for some time, and we look on a

satisfactory sex life as a means to a well-rounded, integrated personality. But those of us who have intercourse with different boys — and never with the staggering numbers that periodical literature suggests — are in the very small minority. Most girls who decide to have intercourse before marriage do so because marriage at the time is impossible. The fact that a girl does not always marry the first boy with whom she has physical relations does not interfere with her intention at the time; nor does it start her on the “road to ruin”.

To sum up, I would say that most undergraduates consider the present situation ideal. College boys are no longer going to prostitutes, but are finding sexual satisfaction with girls on their own level whom they admire and respect. The double standard of morals is disappearing. Intellectually, so the figures assert, we college students are among the upper ten per cent. Many of us will fill important positions — some of us will achieve the “leadership” promised us at our high school graduations. Our position in this matter of chastity may not be right; but, right or wrong, it seems undeniable that it is bound to be influential.

I LIKE BASEBALL, BUT —

BY ELIOT B. SPALDING

I LIKE baseball. The Boston Red Sox were my boyhood heroes. To see Harry Hooper spear a fly while coasting along the grass on the seat of his pants filled me with a rare delight. No one, to my mind, could roam Duffy's Cliff like the great Duffy Lewis himself. At Braves Field, Rabbit Maranville became my idol. I have watched Big League games from the top of lamp posts; I have climbed in over the fence. More recently I have retrograded to attending games on a politician's pass. The day Bill Werber maneuvered a two-base walk was one of my happier adult moments. I have been, am, and suppose I always shall be a fan. I like baseball. But I am bored with the hoary and ludicrous legend that it is "The National Game".

Baseball's claims to piety and a moral mission leave me cold. I yawn at the annual sham battles over "holdouts" and the mid-March dither over "rookie phenoms". Spring training I regard as a tedious and none-too-dressy rehearsal. In common with millions

of my fellow Americans, I am relieved when the farce is over and the more inept performers get the gong. But above all I am fed up with the apple sauce which the swamis of the press box ladle out to their readers under the name of baseball news. Reading this stuff, it is sometimes hard to tell where a swami's activities as advertising man for the ball club end, and where his responsibilities as a working newspaperman begin. Jerome Herman Dean is not the only part of the baseball business that merits the title Dizzy.

Although apologists for Big League baseball are unanimous in hailing it as "The National Game", their slogan is of dubious accuracy. As long ago as 1934 a candid authority was maintaining that "Big League ball is kept alive by the evening newspapers"; and today the marvel of baseball is not the number of fans who throng the ball parks, but the tremendously preponderant total of city dwellers who diligently stay away. The 1937 New York Yankees were by com-

mon admission one of the most spectacular power-houses ever assembled: their estimated home-game attendance averaged 17,569. In a city with a population of eight millions, the number of New Yorkers sitting in the Yankee Stadium on any given afternoon was thus trifling when compared to the millions who preferred to work, drink, golf, damn the Government, or beat their wives.

Although the New York Giants were good enough to win the National League pennant, their average home game attendance was only 15,485. In Detroit, home of the Tigers and banner-attendance city of both leagues, the daily average of customers was 17,626, a mere handful when compared to the city's population of nearly two million. These cities, however, all boast of comparatively gilt-edged clubs; it is when we drop down the ladder that the figures really begin to look groggy. Average attendance at the home games of the Philadelphia Nationals was 4,166, a sorry showing in a city of nearly two-and-one-half million souls. And the St. Louis Browns drew an average attendance of only 2,096.

The enlightened citizens of Chicago bought 20,000,000 movie tickets last year. Yet on the average afternoon only 13,970 Chicagoans

showed enough interest in the Cubs to turn out and watch them at play. Apparently the citizens of Chicago have not yet been notified that baseball is "The National Game". Or if they have, they feel that gaping at Garbo gives them more of a run for their money. It is the same story in all the Major League cities: the patriots who pay their way into the ball parks sit lonely among their peanut shells, pitiful specks of orthodoxy in a vast ocean of unbelief. It is no wonder that most Major League clubs guard their attendance figures carefully, preferring to give out only estimates. Nor do they point with pride to the large number of bindle stiffs who ride free throughout the baseball season. In 1936, it has been estimated, the Chicago Cubs had a total of 309,000 unpaid admissions.

The truth seems to be that the average American can either take "The National Game" or leave it alone. And mostly he leaves it alone. If he goes to one or two games a year, he feels that he has had enough and is content to hibernate until another season. He grows progressively weary during the second game of a double header, and if he is over thirty, leaves early to catch the five o'clock bus. Baseball lacks pace and continuous excitement: it may be

fascinating to those who can follow the finer points of strategy — but where are the laymen who can? How many fans can keep a box score or tell when an infield fly means an automatic out? Take away the hero worship with which the newspapers have surrounded the stars, and the average man would prefer a diet of dish water to a steady assignment in the bleachers.

Of course, the tendency of Young America to snub "The National Game" while making eyes at upstart pastimes like tennis, football, and golf has brought the heads of Big League magnates down with worry almost to the grave. Through astute promotion they have tried, and with some success, to give this waning interest a shot in the arm. But the days when baseball could hope to monopolize the young man's athletic fancy have gone forever. This is particularly true in the colleges where the game in many cases has sunk almost to the status of a minor sport. A college football eleven may play before 50,000 spectators, but when the college nine trots out on the diamond, three hundred or even three, may be in the crowd.

All the facts seem to indicate that baseball is now "The Not-So-National Game".

II

But one would never think so from reading the newspapers. There we find a classic example of chronic over-emphasis. Baseball, rather than football, is the most inflated of all American sports. Apparently the press box swamis, like Rip Van Winkle, are suffering from a twenty-year time-lag in their thinking. Either that or they are in the unhappy position of press agents who fall for their own stuff. At any rate, their devotion to the baseball legend defies the laws of gravity and is one of the eight great wonders of the world. Work done by the poets in glorifying the Court of King Arthur was comparatively an amateur job. Tennyson could have taken lessons from the press box in the manly art of myth-production.

Take gambling, for instance. Ever since the Chicago Black Sox were charged with throwing the 1919 World Series, the Big Leagues have been touchy on the subject. When proposals to install a dog track in Braves Field, Boston, came to public notice in 1934, Ford Frick, who was about to take office as National League President, assured the Associated Press that "such an alliance is absolutely preposterous and entirely at variance

with the principles for which baseball has battled so strenuously". He added that "Organized baseball has outlawed players for gambling. It has waged a ceaseless campaign to wipe out even the slightest signs of gambling in ball parks". Yet anyone who knows anything at all about baseball knows that it is a rare Big League ball park where the gamblers do not openly ply their trade. These volatile spirits will bet on any phase of the game. "Two to one he goes", "Three to five he don't go" — such is their lingo, and the tolerant law does little to disturb them. This gambling which goes on inside the ball parks, however, is small potatoes compared to that which goes on outside. In factories, business houses, and even banks all over the country a tremendous total is bet daily on ingenious baseball pools.

Early this April Broadway Jack Doyle, the betting man, formally announced his odds on the pennant races in the Major League, rating the Yankees at 7 to 10 in the American League and the Giants at 8 to 5 in the National League. Indeed, any American who wants to take a flyer on a ball game doesn't need to send out a Byrd expedition to find a bookie. In pool rooms and cigar stores throughout the land he will find plenty of gentry who will

take his money, and probably his shirt, too, before they get through with him. There is, however, no over-emphasis on this feature of the baseball legend. The swamis have other things to do.

For, while the common man is bogged down at home cursing thermostats and collecting spots on his tonsils, the blithesome swami is flitting south for spring training. Soon from the land of the swamps and the bayous his buoyant voice is heard. He has flushed, it seems, whole coveys of rookies who can field like demons and hit like fiends. Veteran fielders are jammed with ginger; veteran pitchers teeming with novel hooks and dippy dewes. The sage may go scholarly and expound the case of Danning vs. Mancuso for half a column, or confidential and inform us that "Eddie Mayo has a fondness for licorice chewing gum" and that "Bill Werber plays the last few innings in a rubber shirt". Meanwhile, the northern reader knocks another icicle off his ear and turns to the Wall Street pages in a desperate effort to forget. Indeed, the suspicion grows that the ball clubs go south not so much to condition athletes as to reap a harvest of pre-season publicity. And the swamis, who are to baseball what Louella O. Parsons is to Holly-

wood, hasten to oblige. They adventure into the odd-items department and inform us that the White Sox beat the Pirates 27 to 20 in a rabbit hunt, or they astound the world with the news that Bill Lee has a backache, Mike Higgins a bronchial cold, and Buck Newsom a cut over his eye.

Occasionally an intelligent sports writer takes time out to search his soul and take the public into his confidence about some of the practical details of the trade. This takes courage but always makes interesting reading. "We screamed again last spring" wrote one of the abler swamis "when the Red Sox forgot to foot our gingerale and soda bills although they furnished ample stocks of bottled wisdom, *à la carte* meals, laundry, and lodgings which overlooked the pearly distances of the gulf. But that soda slight, we said, was a lick-penny affront by miserly screws. On the other hand the Bees made the journalists happy by allotting four dollars daily for food which most of us authors used to eat in tin tray fodderies where full course dinners cost forty cents". The layman, after spelling out this confession in his halting way, is no longer surprised at the build-ups of mediocre ivory which emanate from the swamp belt during the spring. Indeed, he is sur-

prised that the swamis' dispatches are so restrained.

When the regular season opens, the swami makes the circuit with the ball club and, if he stays in this groove long enough, naturally feels that he belongs to and is part of the game. If his product sometimes reads like advertising copy for the ball club, one should not chide him too harshly. He is a man who, to a certain extent, serves two masters, and one of them must suffer. It is hard, however, to be charitable toward those swamis who have the Horatio Alger complex. These are the lads who fill the afternoon papers with the glamorous life-stories of the stars, all of which could be published under the general title of *Up From Slavery* or *Willing Hands and Honest Hearts*. Most of it is awful tripe, but it builds the Baseball Legend. That is all that really matters.

The swami, like a state-house bureaucrat, views with alarm anything that threatens the stability or prestige of his job. To consolidate his position and protect himself and baseball from attack he has drawn up a series of unwritten laws. The first and most important of these is: "Only a swami may criticize a swami, and if he does it more than once, he's a leper". For the swami, while insisting on his

own right to free comment, believes in literary lynch law for anyone who dares to stand up and put the finger on him. Witness the sad and recent case of Mr. William Terry. Some of the baseball blurbs published daily would seem to fall within the scope of Better Business Bureaus in their campaigns against mendacious, false, and misleading advertising.

But in fairness to the swamis, it must be admitted that many newspapers are eager to serve as calliopes for the baseball industry. They have a fixed obsession that it boosts their circulation. Indeed, the way that the baseball interests have trained the large metropolitan dailies to stand on their heads and jump through hoops is nothing short of astounding. Reputable journals which steadfastly refuse to print the names of motor cars, cigarettes, or washing machines in their news columns on the theory that such mention belongs in the advertising columns at advertising rates, do not hesitate to hand over practically unlimited news space to Big League baseball. Yet Big League baseball, for all its legends and quaint mythology, is just as much a business as selling candy bars, rayon slips, or patent wart-removers.

Perhaps the papers know what they are doing. Or perhaps the swamis, for reasons of state, have mesmerized their bosses into seeing double on the baseball question. Millions of New Yorkers are enthusiastic patrons of movie theatres and beauty shops, while only a handful are baseball zealots: yet baseball news grabs the lion's share of the space; movie notes and beauty hints have to be content with the leavings. During the height of the baseball season a newspaper like the New York *World-Telegram* will devote almost two solid pages daily to the antics of Major and Minor League teams. And for what? To edify a few thousand fanatics who have huddled together in the vast emptinesses of the Polo Grounds?

Under present conditions not even a regiment of bacteriologists could tell definitely whether baseball is a parasite on the newspaper business, or whether the newspaper business is a parasite on baseball. One way to settle the matter would be to count the attendance at the Yankee Stadium twelve months after all New York papers had ceased to print any baseball news. A man wouldn't need to bring his adding machine; the bat boy could do the sum in his head.

WHY THE FARMER FAILS

BY CHESLA C. SHERLOCK

I LIVE in a typical Eastern dairy-farming community. Every farmer up and down our valley, without exception, concentrates all his energy upon the production of "cash crops"—fluid milk, and an acre or two of cabbage and potatoes. A very small percentage of these so-called farmers keep laying hens; only two or three have farm gardens; and there are almost no orchards, even for home use. Only one man has a flock of sheep; not over two per cent keep hogs. Turkeys, ducks, and geese are practically unknown. Not one farm wife in twenty-five bakes bread, and few "bother" with cakes. If any of them makes her own butter, she has eluded my discovery—in spite of the fact that plenty of cream is produced daily at home.

This picture is by no means unusual. Many of my relatives are farmers in the Middle West and I have seen at first hand the change in methods that has come over them in two or three decades. I am familiar with farming communities in almost all sections of the

country and the same general atmosphere prevails. I am not, therefore, picking out an isolated community, even though it happens to be my own, when I say that in this bird's-eye view of visible characteristics we have the root and cause of the present agricultural unrest. To be milking forty cows a day, and not have your own cream and butter on the table, may sound like a joke—but it isn't. To send hundreds of cans of thick cream to market every year and not have your own strawberries or raspberries in the garden to go with some of that cream in a breakfast dish, sounds impossible—but it is sheer, sober fact.

I was dumbfounded when I learned the fact. "What," I managed to ask, "are the cream separators for, if you don't use your own cream?"

"Why, we use them to skim the milk for the calves."

"And what happens to the cream?"

"Oh, we put it back in the other milk to bring up our butterfat test

—you know we have to maintain a certain per cent of butterfat content in our milk the year around, or we will be docked.”

So to keep from being docked our dairymen neighbors send even the cream taken from the milk fed the calves to market—and buy their own butter. I suspect the farm women are secretly glad to be rid of the chore of buttermaking; and it is “cheaper” to buy butter, they say. It is also “cheaper” to buy bread from the bakery truck that comes to the door, than to bake one’s own bread. It is “cheaper” to buy vegetables and fruit than to bother with a garden or orchard. It is “cheaper” to buy hams and bacon than to grow pigs on farm by-products and butcher one’s own supply. It is “cheaper” to do this than to do that, right on down the line.

Nine out of ten of my neighbors have sufficient wood available to supply themselves with fuel for years to come, yet, with only one exception, they all burn coal. And coal costs the farmer just as much as it costs the city man. Although the land in this neighborhood is capable of growing all sorts of grain crops, and despite the fact that such protein concentrates makes up fifty per cent of the feed rations for cattle, grain is bought

on the open market. The dairyman becomes a specialist in the production of fluid milk, and will not “bother” with anything else. The tobacco farmer grows tobacco; the wheat farmer, wheat; the cotton farmer, cotton—and so on. This, in a nutshell, is the precise reason why agriculture is in the doldrums today.

Dr. Wallace speaks feelingly of Balanced Abundance, but it is the lack of balanced management on the farm itself which has created the farm problem. When the farmer concentrates on a one-crop program and concludes that he will buy the rest of the things he needs, he not only defeats himself in the real abundant living he might have for his family, but his entrance into the market tends to deprive millions of other families of this self-same abundance. His needless demand stimulates prices and puts many items beyond the reach of the millions in urban centers. What effect, for instance, does the farmer’s entrance into the coal market have upon the sustained high price of coal for the needy—especially, when down-wood is rotting in his own woodlots? What effect has the refusal of farm housewives to make their own bread had in sustaining the price of bakers’ bread to the needy in the cities?

The answer is obvious. The farmer is no longer merely a producer; he is a consumer *in the market of the very products he should produce for himself*. How many of our pseudo-economists, who are cooking up high-sounding phrases, have ever stopped to think of that?

It is my belief that most of the so-called "surplus" problem roots in the fact that the farmer has gone specialist. He has not produced an actual surplus so far as national needs are concerned; but he has given aid to a number of factors which have made it impossible for more and more of our people to afford to buy. The dairy, wheat, tobacco, cotton, and corn farmers must go back to the original system of agricultural economy: they must diversify. Our grandfathers were forced by necessity to grow their own food *first*. Farming to them was a way of *living* before it was a means of *livelihood*. Their grandsons, it seems to me, must come back to that principle if they are to preserve this independence either politically or economically.

My dairymen neighbors are told that the reason for the ruinously low price (to them) of fluid milk is that there is a surplus arriving in New York City. Suppose these same neighbors who do not have a garden or an orchard, who do not

raise poultry or keep laying flocks, who have no pigs or sheep, were to curtail their fluid milk production to an extent sufficient merely to produce the necessary foodstuffs for their own tables. What would happen? Any surplus depressing their prices would be removed overnight. By this recaptured program of diversification the farmer would be practicing the identical sort of conservation the political overlords are now paying him to do. He would have to rotate crops, and introduce new crops not now grown, in order to supply himself more nearly with the balanced program required. He would spend more time growing protein concentrates and less in milking and worrying. His milk costs would decrease because he had produced his own feed and saved the cash outlay; any profit involved would be his own.

It is high time our agricultural leaders began bringing home to the dairy farmer, the corn farmer, the wheat grower, the cotton and tobacco farmers the fact that diversification is the surest way out of the morass. A better standard of living for the farmer and everyone else would surely result, and more of the farmer's dollar would go into purchases in the heavy industries where his best market has always been.

ONLY SUCKERS BUY WHOLESALE

By I. A. HIRSCHMANN

WHEN a renting agent in an apartment house, or a sly salesman in a retail store, or a letter from a friend brings you a "discount card" enabling you to go to a shop, showroom, or warehouse to buy goods at "wholesale", you will promptly tear the card to bits — if you are wise. Nine times out of ten, discount cards are merely invitations to visit an establishment where the wholesale tags are marked either in code or figures far above the actual retail values, and where the price quoted verbally to you is usually based on your apparent ability to pay. It requires only common sense to realize that reliable wholesale houses will not sell to you at bargain prices, because they must protect the retail stores which are their main outlet. Quite obviously, any wholesaler who is willing to deal with you as an individual is in the "gyp" category.

Despite this logical conclusion, thousands of men and women everywhere are falling victims to the beguiling discount card. In the

first place, the card in itself is a powerful temptation — the temptation to save money. Second, it affords the user an opportunity to boast to friends that he or she is a shrewd trader. Third, the possession of such cards gives most people the impression that they are privileged characters in the community, persons of real importance. But it might take the wind out of their sails to learn that, in the "wholesale" establishments, they would get the same service and prices if they just happened to walk in off the street without bearing the magic slips of pasteboard.

How does the racket work? To begin with, consider the case of Mrs. A, a housewife of New Jersey. She wanted to buy a solid maple bedroom set. A well-meaning friend gave her a discount card and suggested that she visit a certain wholesale showroom in New York. Mrs. A, much impressed, went to the establishment and bought a bedroom set for \$135. Of course, the furniture wasn't "exactly what she wanted", but she ac-

cepted the less-desirable style in order to take advantage of an obvious bargain. Hadn't the very pleasant salesman assured her that she'd find the same set in her local retail store, priced at \$195?

Mrs. A was somewhat surprised when the furniture was delivered at night instead of in the daytime, and she did complain to the truckmen that the bed was scratched from rough handling. Yet she had bought at wholesale, and it was only fair that she pay the delivery charge and put up with a few scratches here and there. Also, the color of the maple didn't seem exactly right, but after all, you couldn't be certain under artificial light.

A few days later Mrs. A happened to visit her local retail store, and asked to see a duplicate of the suite she had purchased in New York. Somehow, she was feeling definitely superior. But the department buyer listened dubiously while Mrs. A described her set. Finally he suggested that he examine the furniture himself. He drove Mrs. A home, examined the set, explained that it was *not* solid maple, and that his store sold similar sets for \$70 — the regular retail price.

Mrs. A then phoned the very pleasant salesman in the New York

showroom, but was told brusquely that all sales were final. No adjustments allowed. The only satisfaction Mrs. A derived from the deal was the local department buyer's promise not to mention the truth to her husband.

The wholesale furniture racket that taught Mrs. A her lesson has recently grown to such proportions that a department store in a large Eastern city has opened "wholesale showrooms" under another name, not many blocks away. Here, the same furniture is sold at a considerably higher mark-up than in the regular retail department.

Consider next the case of Mrs. B, of Chicago. The scene opens in her living room where she has been boasting of her wonderful Persian-lamb coat, procured for \$550 from a wholesaler, who had assured her that its retail value was from \$650 to \$1000. Those in the room accustomed to buying at retail prices were feeling slightly foolish. Suddenly a fur merchant interrupted the conversation to explain the difference between the coat his hostess had purchased and the one she might have obtained in a reputable retail shop for \$100 more.

"A good Persian coat," he remarked, "is made from 24 to 26 skins, but coats made for the 'wholesale' trade contain no more

than 18. These 18 skins must be stretched to the utmost. It's only natural that after a little wear, the surface cracks, peels, and dries out. Figure the proposition for yourself. If you buy a coat of 18 skins at \$550 wholesale, and a coat of 26 skins at \$650 retail, even at only \$18 per skin the wholesaler is gypping you out of \$44, instead of giving you the \$100 'saving' you anticipated."

By this time the hostess was in a combative mood. "Maybe there are only 18 skins in my coat," she said defiantly, "but I got exceptionally fine fur, worth lots more than \$18 per skin. The wholesaler told me he had just a few left over from a fine lot, from which he had made coats selling for more than \$1000."

"Perhaps," said the expert. "But doesn't it seem more reasonable that if the wholesaler was making coats worth over \$1000, that he'd use these skins for such a purpose instead of selling them to you at about half-price? After all, he has a lot more to gain by placing the coat with a retail outlet that gives him a fine business every year, than by selling it to an individual who visits his showrooms every few years to buy a single item."

A pained silence settled over the room. Other guests who had been

buying goods at "wholesale" looked quite uneasy. Then the fur expert summed up the situation.

"When you dealt with a bootlegger during Prohibition, you were pretty likely to get poisonous liquor or stuff of a grade far lower than represented. You take the same chance today when you deal with a 'wholesale bootlegger'."

II

Consider another angle of the racket. Do women who buy dresses wholesale receive good values? The answer is supplied by a recent survey made by the Retail Dry Goods Association of New York. Women hired as shoppers purchased 200 garments from various wholesalers. The dresses were then taken to the merchandise managers of well-known department stores. These experts found that of the 200 garments, 196 were either overpriced or obsolete in style, while only four were genuine wholesale values. The entire lot was finally sold to jobbers at 70 per cent *less* that the total price the shoppers paid.

In Chicago, the Better Business Bureau purchased fifty-four separate items of merchandise at so-called wholesale prices. The total cost was \$395. The same shoppers

were then sent to reputable stores where, after checking, they learned that they could have bought the entire lot for \$266. On an average, the wholesalers had charged 48 per cent more than the retail dealers.

At this point in our story, some reader will triumphantly explode: "But I go to places where I buy *nationally-advertised* products at wholesale! For example, I know a certain radio set is selling in most stores for \$20. But a cousin of one of the fellows who works in that radio plant can get me the same set at wholesale."

Perhaps. But there is the case of the Philadelphia gentleman who purchased a radio directly from the plant of a nationally-known concern for \$24. The regular retail price was \$40. After two weeks, the set developed a flaw. When he took it back to the factory, he could get no repairs, no exchange, no satisfaction whatever. Each "wholesale" purchase was final. At last, the man carried the set to a repair shop. The proprietor told him he would profit by purchasing a new set, rather than by paying for a rebuilding job. So the man traded in the faulty set with a local dealer, who allowed \$18 on a \$40 purchase. Adding the initial \$24 to the \$22 paid on the second set, the Philadelphia gentleman ruefully realized that he

had paid \$46 for a radio which he might have bought for \$40.

Every one of the instances cited in this article has actually occurred. They can be duplicated by thousands of other similar incidents. But despite the many warnings issued by trade organizations, and despite the fact that any discerning purchaser should realize that there must be fraud somewhere in the "wholesale business", the gypsies flourish in every city in the United States. Certainly it is not difficult to understand that if the system were as plausible as advertised by its practitioners, there would soon be need to maintain retail stores. In other words, our whole national structure of merchandising, based on reputable goods at reasonable prices, could be abolished overnight.

Perhaps a final moral may be drawn from the attitude of a certain New York woman who has suffered many tribulations at the hands of "wholesalers". She says that only a court summons could ever force her to enter a wholesale establishment again. She has learned from unhappy experience that people who buy at "wholesale" only tell about the bargains they think they have secured—they never mention the many painful occasions when they were "stuck".

GALLONS OR BUSHEL?

A Story

BY JESSE STUART

WE's all settin' around th' fire. Th' wind was blowin' hard. Th' snow was flyin'. Shelf was parchin' corn on a griddle over th' fire. Ma was darnin' th' heels o' Pa's socks. I's piecin' me a quilt. Pa was playin' th' fiddle and waitin' fer th' sweet-taters to roast on th' hearth. Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim were back at th' Moonshine Still.

Pa was fiddlin' *Sourwood Mountains*. Ma's pattin' her feet and smokin' and darnin' away. All at once somebody rapped our door. Pa stopped sawin' th' fiddle. Ma stopped pattin' her foot and darnin'.

"Who do you reckon it is?" says Pa. He looked surprised. Not many people come to our house. We live in a out-way place at th' head o' th' Hollow.

"I don't know," says Ma.

"Must I let 'em in?" says Brother Shelf as he took th' griddle from over th' fire.

"Don't be in sich a hurry Son,"

says Pa, "I'll attend to th' door. Don't know who it might be."

"Rap-rap-rap-rap."

"Jist in a minute," says Pa.

Pa gets up and goes to th' door. He lays his fiddle down on th' foot o' th' bed as he goes over to th' door. Pa lifts up th' latch and pulls th' door open.

"Howdy-do," says a well-dressed man at our door.

"Howdy-do, Stranger," says Pa. "Come in!"

We started cranin' our necks and lookin' at th' strange man that come in our house. Ma sorty made faces at us to act nice. He was a fine-lookin' young man. Had on a big gray overcoat with blue checked squares over it. Had on a gray felt hat and a brown shirt and a black necktie. His cheeks were red as red roses in bloom.

"Come around and get you a chear," says Pa, "I 'spect you're purty cold."

"It's an awful day out there," says th' strange man. He looked

around over our big front room. Two beds in th' back o' th' room. Th' dresser over against th' wall. Th' trunk back against th' wall between th' two beds and a standle-table by th' trunk.

"Let me have your hat and overcoat," I says.

"Thank you," says th' stranger and looked jist as straight at me. I never had any body to look at me so.

"What might your name be, Stranger," says Pa.

"My name is Bert Carpenter," says th' stranger and he reaches Pa his hand.

"Old Bill Duncan's my name," says Pa, takin' th' stranger by th' hand. "Over th' is my wife, Martha Duncan, this is my little boy, Shelf, and this is my oldest girl, Ida. This is little Bill here, that is Sam, that is Charlie, Moss, Grace, and over there on th' bed asleep is little Martha. We got two boys out sommers jist now. Got a right good houseful."

"What have you come here fur?" asks Shelf.

"Not so fast young man," says Pa, "I'll attend to that question myself."

"Ah, Sonnie," says th' stranger rubbin' Shelf's head, "I've come to find a place for airships to land." Then he laughs and Pa laughs.

We all laugh and Shelf turns around and looks plagued. He puts th' griddle o' corn back over th' blazin' sticks o' wood on th' fire-place. Pa jist turns and looks at th' stranger. Pa's eyes look straight at 'im. Then Pa says: "Why did you come to these parts, Bert Carpenter?"

"W'y, I'm lookin' over oil-lands," says th' stranger. "I'm checkin' over all these farms for a Firm. After I look 'em over I'll ask to take leases on them. I heard you had four-hundred acres o' hill land here. So I thought I'd come to you first."

Pa says: "Th' reason I ast you, there's been a lot o' frolickin' o' Government men through here lately. That's why I's a little sus-picy. I's goin' to tell you if you's a Revenuer to get out'n my house right now. Get out fast enough to not let your shirt-tail touch your behind. That's th' way I feel to-ward them birds!"

"Oh, no," says th' stranger, "I'm jist Bert Carpenter. I've come here for a purpose. I've been sent here to your place to look over your big farm back here among these hills."

"That's allright," says Pa. "I's jist goin' to tell you th' Revenuers ain't done much around here. If they didn't get out in a hurry w'y we jist

plant 'em where they'd never sprout!"

"Then you get rid o' 'em," says Mr. Carpenter, "kill 'em, do you?"

"Well, I ain't sayin'," says Pa, "fer you never know about th' Law. But what would you think? It jist ain't a healthy place here fer Revenuers. I'll tell you that right now!"

"I hate a Revenuer," says Mr. Carpenter lookin' over toward Pa and layin' it off with his hands. "W'y it's a sneakin' job, Mr. Duncan!"

"I forgot to ast you," says Pa, "but where might you be from?"

"Peoria, Illinois," says Mr. Carpenter.

"That's a fur piece away from here, ain't it?" says Pa.

"Yes, Mr. Duncan, it is."

"Lord my taters air burnin'," says Pa. "I got to talkin' about them dad-durned Revenuers and let my sweet-taters burn. Reach me th' poker, Ida."

I reach Pa th' poker. He takes th' long sweet-taters out'n th' ashes. They smell so sweet and good, roasted under th' ashes and th' wood coals.

"Have a tater and some parched corn," says Pa. "Parched corn and roasted sweet-taters air good together. Jist don't eat too much, fer supper'll be ready atter a while."

"Yes," says Ma, "I'll start gettin' it now. It's about time fer th' boys to be gettin' in. They'll be hungry and wantin' to stick their feet under th' table."

Ma puts her darnin' away and gets up from her chair and walks through th' front room door to th' dog-trot and then to th' kitchen.

"This potato is sure good," says Mr. Carpenter. "It's sweet as sugar. It's good with parched corn, too."

Mr. Carpenter would look at me. Then he'd eat his tater and take a mouthful o' parched corn and eat it jist like a pig eatin' corn. Shelf would pass th' griddle o' corn around to all o' us and we'd take parched corn and eat with our roasted taters.

"You're a pretty girl, Miss Ida," says th' stranger to me. Well, he warn't so much a stranger now as he was when he first come in th' house. He jist looked at me. I guess my cheeks got red. I says: "I thank you." Then he turned to Pa and says: "They tell me th' girls from these hills make good wives."

"I don't know," says Pa, "I guess they do. Martha stands by me. She's been a good spouse in th' times o' trouble and distress. I guess the gals air right purty to a man o' your age, but I don't notice 'em anymore. I ust to have a eye fer purty gals before I got hitched.

But that don't bother my mind none now. I 'spect you're a single man?"

"Yes," says Mr. Carpenter, "I'm a single man. I've never been married."

"I jist guessed that," says Pa, "by th' tone o' your talk! Young man you've got a lot to larn yet. Atter you get married you can't be a gay rooster with a lot o' purty feathers and spurs. Your spurs will get dull and your feathers will get ruffled."

Pa just laughed and laughed. Mr. Carpenter bent over and laughed. Then when he straightened up he looked at me.

"I allus told Martha," says Pa, "that th' rooster ought to rule th' roost. But I've larned th' hens jist about rule th' roost since I've been a married man. How do they do up in Peoria?"

"The hens rule the roost," says Mr. Carpenter, "just like they do all over America!" Then Pa and Mr. Carpenter bent over and laughed and laughed.

I says: "I'll go and help Ma get supper!"

"That's right where you ought-a be," says Pa, "What air you hangin' around in here fer nohow?"

"Did you ever hear th' song, Mr. Duncan, *Peoria in the Spring*?"

"Never did," says Pa.

"I heard you playin' th' fiddle,"

says Mr. Carpenter, "before I come in th' house. I jist wondered if you could play *Peoria in the Spring*."

"Can't play that," says Pa, "but I can play *Sourwood Mountains* fer you, or *Zeb Turner's Gal*!"

I run out'n th' front room, through th' dog-trot to th' kitchen. I started helpin' Mom get supper. I could hear Pa playin' th' fiddle fer Mr. Carpenter. Atter Pa'd play a piece I could hear 'em laugh. Jist seemed like they's gettin' along fine back in th' front room. I looked in th' oven to see if th' bread was done. I was so excited.

Ma says to me: "What is th' matter with you, Ida? You're beside yourself!"

I says: "I don't know, Ma. Jist something!"

That's all I could say.

II

We put the two big pitchers o' milk on th' table. One pitcher o' sweet milk and a pitcher o' butter milk. We set th' big dish o' yaller butter on th' table. Ma cut th' big pone o' hot corn-bread up in square pieces in th' bread-pan. She lifted out a plate o' th' squares and th' sweet-smellin' steam come off'n th' bread. She took th' soup-beans from th' pot on th' stove and set a couple o' pumpkin pies on th'

table. Then she opened a can o' blackberries, a can o' peaches, and a can o' strawberry preserves. She took th' fried Irish-taters from th' skillet—good and brown—and th' baked sweet-taters from th' oven. I took th' biled short-ribs and sausages from th' stove and put 'em on th' table.

"Th' little bite's ready," says Ma. "Go and tell your Pa."

I run back across th' dog-trot and told Pa and Mr. Carpenter. I heard Pa say: "Come on children: supper is ready!"

"I guess we're jist in time fer supper," says Brother Tobbie to Brother Jim. They's comin' down th' bank by th' dog-trot. Th' dog-trot is a entry that runs between our big log front room and our big log kitchen.

"Come right in, Mr. Carpenter," says Pa, "and get your feet under th' table. I know you must be hungry!"

"I'm feelin' like my beans," says Mr. Carpenter.

We all got in th' kitchen at th' same time. Brother Jim and Tobbie got in jist as Pa and Mr. Carpenter did.

"My boy, Jim, Mr. Carpenter, and my boy, Tobbie," says Pa.

"Glad to know you boys," says Mr. Carpenter, "jist don't Mister me. Call me Bert."

Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim looked at one another. Then they'd look at Pa. I knowed they felt suspicy with a stranger in th' house. But they didn't know Mr. Carpenter. He warn't a Revenuer. That's what they thought he was.

I says: "Brother Jim, Mr. Carpenter has come to look over th' land fer oil. We'll all be rich one o' these days if we find oil on th' place." I jist laughed as big as anything when I said this. I didn't care what he'd come fer. I could tell I's goin' to like Mr. Carpenter.

"So he did?" says Jim. "You ain't shore Mr. Carpenter ain't a wolf in sheep's clothin', air you?"

"Hold your tater now, Jim," says Pa. "Mr. Carpenter ain't no Revenuer. He's allright. You know when your old Pappie tells you about a man it's jist that way. Do you think a man decent as Mr. Carpenter could be a Revenuer?"

"Well if you air Bert Carpenter," says Brother Tobbie from th' fur side o' th' table, "I'll tell you right now so you won't haf to sneak around about it. We've made a run to-day. Right up in th' head o' th' Hollow. Now report it if you want to! But if you do, warn th' fellars you send in to get us. And if you come, your hide won't hold shucks by th' time we get through feedin'

you th' powder and lead! That's th' medicine we give them birds! Th' betrayer will get th' most o' th' hot lead, too!"

"Boys," says Mr. Carpenter, "I've come to look over th' lay o' this land. I've been sent here by my Firm. It's a big Firm that I work for. I'm only an agent for the Firm. I've got to do my duty. Do you believe I'm a Revenue Man?"

"I don't know," says Brother Jim, "you can't tell about th' wolves now-a-days that come to these hills in sheep's clothin'. I ain't sayin' you air or you ain't! I'm jist a-sayin' you'd better not be!"

Pa says: "Now reach and help yourself, Bert, if you can find enough to eat. It is before you. You are welcome as th' flowers in May. Make yourself at home. Th' boys air jist a little skurred o' Revenuers. I believe Martha is too. Martha, why don't you pour me and th' boys our little toddies!"

I knowed why Ma didn't do it. She might a-thought Mr. Carpenter warnt ust to it. Pa and Jim and Tobbie allus took a glass o' whiskey at night instead o' milk or coffee. Ma went over and got th' jug from th' bottom shelf in th' safe and poured Pa's toddie and one fer Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie.

"You want one, too?" says Ma to Mr. Carpenter.

"Yes," says Mr. Carpenter, "I'll take a glass, too. Thank you!"

Pa jist smiled and took a sup from th' glass. Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie jist gulped theirs right down and ast fer th' second glass. 'Peared like they didn't like Mr. Carpenter.

It was a sight th' way Mr. Carpenter et our grub. 'Peared like he was happy. But he was shy as a ring-necked pheasant o' Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie.

"I suppose, Bert," says Pa, "that you can stand our company here while you're lookin' fer oil. I hope you can stand our grub. I hope you'll like your stay here."

"I could stay here fer ever," says Mr. Carpenter, "but I don't think your boys like me none too well."

Brother Jim looked at Brother Tobbie. Brother Jim says: "Bert Carpenter, how do you like our three-ply moonshine?"

"Fine," says Mr. Carpenter. "I've seen things I'd love more. One since I've been here."

"W'y," says Pa, "it was my music. You liked *Zeb Turner's Gal*. You're too bashful to say so. It's got it all over your *Peoria in th' Spring*. Jist somehow that song can't rile me and make me pat my feet like *Zeb Turner's Gal*."

Pa laughed and laughed. Mr. Carpenter acted kindly plagued.

Then Brother Tobbie says: "Well, we get sixty gallon o' three-ply moonshine to th' acre here on these old hills. We get three dollars a gallon fer th' whiskey and forty cents a bushel fer th' corn. Which would you rather have, Bert Carpenter, gallons or bushels?"

"W'y gallons of course," says Mr. Carpenter. But he didn't act like he meant it.

My heart jist jumped up and down in my bosom. I thought: "Maybe it is me he wants. What will Jerry say? Jerry'll be jealous o' me then! He'll be jealous o' me and wished he'd ast me to marry 'im before now. But I love Mr. Carpenter. I know I do. Love is a ticklin' o' th' backbone and you jist can't turn around and scratch it! That's it. I'm in love too. I know I am. He loves me. I can tell he does. I don't care if he's a Rev- enuer. I can't help what he is! I jist hope he ain't! If he is, Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim will kill 'im. Pa'll kill 'im. If he's a Rev- enuer and asts me, I'll go to Peoria with 'im. That's what I'll do if he asts me! I'll leave these hills!"

III

"Well," says Pa, "if you all air through your suppers jist break your plates and knock out your

teeth and let's get in th' front room and have a little music and a little dancin'. I'm rarin' to saw on a good break-down. I'll give you th' *Turkey Scratch*. Can you dance, Bert?"

"Jist a little," says Mr. Carpenter.

"Can you do th' Turkey Scratch?" says Brother Tobbie.

"I don't know," says Mr. Carpenter. "Can you?"

"Oh, a little," says Brother Tobbie, kindly bashful like. He wouldn't tell Mr. Carpenter that he winned th' dancin' prize at th' County Fair.

"Yes," says Pa, "he can piantly do 'er!"

We went in th' front room. Pa took th' jug with 'im. Pa says: "Now boys jist a little more o' th' sperets from th' corn and a little resin on my bow. We'll let Tobbie do th' Turkey Scratch. Atter Bert sees 'im maybe Bert can do it!"

Pa got th' fiddle. Brother Tobbie stepped out in th' floor. We clapped our hands and patted our feet. Brother Tobbie kicked higher than th' ceilin', it looked like. He danced then almost a-settin' on th' floor, kickin' his feet out. He danced all around th' room between th' two beds and th' fireplace. Then Pa let th' bow kindly quiver and die. Brother Tobbie slowed down to a stop and said "Whew".

He slung th' sweat from his forehead with his finger and jist drapped down in a chair, give out.

Mr. Carpenter got up and took his coat off. He says: "Bear down on 'er, Old Bill Duncan! I'm a rearin' to go! I'll show you how we *Scratch th' Turkey* in Peoria! It won't be *Peoria in the Spring*, neither!"

Pa says: "Martha fetch me th' jug."

Ma reached Pa th' jug. He took a big dram. Then he give th' bow a long rake across th' strings. "All-right," says Pa, "let's go, Bert!"

Of all th' fiddlin' you ever heard, Pa put it up. He tried 'imself in company. We started patten' and Bert started dancin'. It beat any dancin' we'd ever seen in Kentucky. I'll tell you th' dust come from th' floor and from th' ceilin'. Bert went around faster than Brother Tobbie on th' floor. It made your head swim to watch 'im! And we all started to holler-in'. W'y Pa let out a big "whoop!" and he'd pat his feet and might nigh bend down to th' fiddle! Bert put in all kind o' extra steps and whirls! We could feel th' wind from Bert. Jist like a February wind wheezin' through th' oaks.

"He's a dancer from away back yander," says Pa. "He's got Kentucky blood in 'im from summers.

He's got mountain blood in 'im!"

Pa jist about broke his arm playin' fer Bert. He didn't get tired. Pa jist slowed down to a stop. Pa says: "Son, you ain't no Revenuer, air you? You're jist like one o' my boys to me already. I'll make th' County Fair Champean out'n you. You're a winner fer this Spring, shore as God made th' hills! Jist how long do you aim to stay with us?"

"Forever, maybe," says Bert. "I'd love to stay forever!"

Brother Tobbie looked at Brother Jim. Pa looked at Bert. Then Brother Tobbie looked at Bert and Brother Jim looked at Pa. I looked at Bert and Ma looked over at Pa. My heart jist fluttered like a leaf in th' wind. I knowed somethin' was goin' to happen. It would happen soon, too.

"Give Bert th' little back-room upstairs," says Pa. "Jist let 'im have that bed by 'imself. Jist take your suitcase up there, Bert, and hang your coat on a nail to stay awhile."

Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim went upstairs with Bert. Brother Tobbie carried his suitcase fer 'im I jist thought: "I'm glad my brothers like Bert better."

Th' next day Bert put on his overcoat atter breakfast and

trapped off to th' hills. He was gone all day. He come in fer supper and we danced again. Pa sawed th' fiddle and th' boys danced. 'Peared like Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie liked Bert better. We all liked Bert. I loved Bert. I waited fer 'im to ast me to go out with 'im and look over oil land. He'd come in with a map he'd drawed on a piece of paper o' the hills and houses. Then he'd say: "I think here's th' place we might drill for oil. Here's th' place th' well ought to be."

One day Bert went with Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim to th' still up in th' Sulphur Spring Holler in th' coal mine. When he come back to th' house that night he says to Pa: "You've got a good place for a still. No Revenue man will ever find it unless he betrays you."

"Yep," says Pa, "it's a right purty place back there. No one goes that fur back among these dark woods but our neighbors. Th' Pratts live back from th' Sulphur Spring Holler."

"Th' Pratts, did you say?" says Bert. "That name 'Pratt' seems like I've heard before."

"Yes," says Pa, "Ida over there could tell you about th' Pratts. Jim Pratt's boy Jerry 's been tryin' to marry my Ida. But I think they's th' very sneekin' foxes that turned us up to th' Government. Worked

around and had it done because we make th' best whiskey in these hills. Old Jim Pratt can't come anyways nigh old Bill when it comes to runnin' th' fragrant water from th' corn."

"That's why he turned you up was it?" says Bert. "Is that th' reason?"

Bert looked down at the floor. He didn't say anything. His face got red. Then he looked up at me. I looked at 'im.

Th' next day Bert says: "Ida, do you want to scout over th' hills with me and look for oil prospects?"

I says: "I've got to ast Pa first. He may not want me out runnin' over th' hills with a strange man!"

"I'm a strange man?" says Bert and he looked at th' ground and kicked th' dirt with his toe. "I'm nothin'! I'm a fool. I'm in love."

Pa says: "You can go anyplace with Bert. I trust that boy. He's allright. I love 'im like he's one o' my boys. Jist took up here like a stray dog. He acted like a dog that's been away from home a long time and jist got back. W'y he's even hepped 'em fer one day at th' still. Jist watched 'em make th' best whiskey that ever come out'n these hills."

I put on my coat. I went down th' road with Bert. We'd jist got to th' pine woods by th' old Darby House. We stopped under th' big white oak where Ma ust to milk th' cows. Bert says: "Ida, I've got a lot to tell you. I have to tell you. I've got to get it off my chest. I'm not what you think I am."

I says: "I know, Honey, what you're goin' to tell me. You don't haf to tell me unless you want to. But you are a Revenuer, ain't you?"

"Yes," says Bert, "I am. I have betrayed all of you. I come to arrest your father. He's the biggest moonshiner in these hills. No one has been able to get the goods on 'im. I've been sent here because on the Federal Force I'm the one selected for this job. I know the Kentucky hill people pretty well. My grandfather came from Kentucky. He was a fiddler. My father was a fiddler. I learned to Scratch th' Turkey when he used to play it for me. He taught me to dance it."

I says: "Pa says you had Kentucky blood in you. Pa said some of your people had come from th' hills. Pa was right. But Pa don't believe you're a Revenuer."

"That's what hurts me," says Bert. "I love you. I'm going to ask you to marry a Revenuer. Will you do it?"

"It's against our religion, Bert,"

I says, "but, Honey, I'll do it!"

I put my arms around his neck. The wind whined through the oak limbs above us. I put my lips to Bert's lips. I loved him. I would marry him. I couldn't help what he'd done. I'd ruther he'd killed a man though, as to be a Revenuer. I didn't tell 'im. But it run through my mind. "What would Ma think? What would Pa think?" I didn't care what they thought. I was marryin' Bert and not them.

Bert says: "And just to think, Ida, it was Jim Pratt that turned your father Bill Duncan up for making moonshine. He got twenty-five dollars for doing it. He's the second-biggest moonshiner I've found in all this part of the state. Just one job I want to do before I turn my badge in. I want to arrest Jim Pratt. I want to get that sweet little Jerry who thinks he loves you. You don't mind do you?"

"Not one bit," I says, "and I think Pa and Ma and my brothers will be mighty glad."

"Did he ever ask you to marry him?" says Bert to me looking me in the eyes. Before I had time to answer him he says: "Honey, you got the bluest eyes I ever saw. Just like a Kentucky sky in April."

"Yes," I says, "Jerry ast me to marry him more than one time. But Pa and old Jim Pratt was at

the outs. So we thought we'd better wait until the families got things patched up a little. His boys out gunnin' fer my brothers. Brother Tobbie and Brother Jim packin' guns fer Jerry, Amos, and Candy Pratt. W'y I couldn't a brought Jerry home. My brothers would a killed 'im."

"Just like they'll do me," says Bert.

"Maybe not," I says. "But it may not be very healthy fer a while. Jist you watch your step."

"I'm goin' back and tell the whole thing," says Bert. "I'm going to come clean."

IV

We walked back around the way we'd come. Th' sun had gone down. Th' winter trees were bare. The wind moaned through their leafless limbs. Bert had his left arm around me, and I had my right arm around him. He helt my left hand with his right hand. Th' path was a nar path but we's walkin' close together and made it allright. Bert walked ahead o' me and parted th' briars. Now we walked back side by side facin' th' briars together.

I says: "It'll be a lot o' fun goin' through life like this together — side by side."

"Yes," says Bert.

I says: "Why are you so silent, Honey? Why don't you talk?"

Bert says: "I dread telling your Pa and your brothers."

I says: "Don't worry. We'll make it somehow. If we don't I'll run off and go to Peoria with you."

"If you do," says Bert, "you'll have your Pa and your brothers right after you with a lot o' guns. We'll have to stay right here and face the music. I'm just afraid it won't be th' *Turkey Scratch* either. I'd like th' hills better than Peoria. I'm at home here. Life comes back. I could live here forever."

When we got to th' house Pa was out in th' yard. Pa was actin' pleased. I thought it was because I'd been out with Bert. Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie had come back from th' still. I run up and I says: "Pa I got something I want to tell you!"

"Allright, Ida," says Pa, "let's have it. Right out with it."

I says: "I'm goin' to get married."

"To that Jerry Pratt?" says Pa.

"No," says Brother Jim, "she ain't goin' to marry a Pratt. We got something to say about that, ain't we, Brother Tobbie?"

"We shore have," says Brother Tobbie. "We know they ain't no Pratt comin' in th' Duncan house. Ain't never been one and ain't goin' to be one!"

"Wait a minute," I says, "jist hold your hot taters a minute and shuffle 'em in your hands to keep 'em cool!"

Ma come runnin' out'n th' kitchen. She heard all o' us into it. She says: "What's th' matter with 'em, Bill?"

Pa says: "No matter a-tall, Martha. Come out'n see fer yourself."

"Nothin', Ma," I says, "only I'm goin' to get married. Pa and Brother Jim and Tobbie thinks it's Jerry Pratt. But it ain't. It's Bert."

"Yes," says Bert, "it's me. I ain't nothing. I must confess. I—"

Bert stopped. Jim looked at Brother Tobbie. Pa looked at Brother Jim and Brother Tobbie. Ma looked at Pa. She's just waitin' to see what they'd do. Jist seemed like they all knowed what's wrong.

"Jist as I told you, Pa," says Brother Tobbie, "about takin' strangers in th' house. He's a Revener. That's what he is!"

Brother Tobbie pulled a long blue gun. Pa jerked his gun from his hip.

I run over and got in front o' Bert. I screamed: "Don't shoot!" But when I looked around I saw Pa had Brother Tobbie covered with his gun. Pa says: "Son, you drap that gun. Let me hear what Bert's got to say fer hisself. I'll be

th' Law at this house yet for a while. Not one o' you young sprouts!"

Brother Tobbie let his gun fall. Ma picked it up and held it. Pa turned around and says: "Now, Bert, speak fer yourself."

"Well," says Bert, "I come here to get you. I come here to arrest you. You're th' man they're after. You're th' biggest moonshiner loose among the hills. I was sent here because I know you people better than most of th' other boys on the Firm. I didn't come for oil. I come to locate moonshiners and especially to get you." Bert looked at th' ground. He kicked th' dirt with th' toe o' his shoe.

"Go on with your story," says Pa. "I want to hear th' rest o' it"

"When I first saw Ida I loved her."

"Go on," says Pa.

"Jim Pratt turned you up and got twenty-five dollars for it."

"Th' man I thought," says Pa.

"Th' dirty low-down skunk," says Brother Tobbie. "Jist haf to waste a shell on th' polecat."

"Quiet," says Pa. "Bert's talkin' now."

"I heard you say he's a moonshiner too. I didn't know it. Then I heard you say Jerry was interested in Ida. I was, too. I didn't like it. He was betrayin' you. I was be-

trayin' you, too. I couldn't say anything just then."

"Go on," says Pa, his hand on his gun. His eyes twinklin'. Ma standin' there shakin'. Brother Jim lookin' mean out'n his eyes. Jist waitin', it looked like to me, to run in and grab Bert. Maybe stick 'im with a knife.

"I'm not betraying you," says Bert. "I'm not turning you in. I'm throwing my badge away. My Grandpa was from Kentucky. I love the hills. I'm stayin' here. I've come back home. Just one job I want to do before I turn my badge in. I'm going to get Jim Pratt."

"Bert," says Pa, "you ain't tellin' me nothin'. I knowed all th' time you's a Revenuer. I knowed all th' time Ida'd marry Jerry Pratt if she didn't get you. I knowed you's a Revenuer th' first time I laid eyes on you. You can't fool me. I can look at a Revenuer and know 'im. I can almost taste one. I can feel one. I can smell one. I knowed you warn't gettin' away with no reports on us. I felt like you'd come clean. I told th' folks here in th' house you larned th' Turkey Scratch from Kentucky. I knowed, my boy, these old hills would get in your blood in th' end."

Pa looked at brothers Tobbie and Jim. He looked at Ma. I jist wondered what they'd say about

me marryin' Bert. I didn't care. I'd marry 'im if I had to run off to Peoria and do it.

"You can have 'er Bert," says Pa.

"No," says Brother Tobbie, "she can't marry a Revenuer. That's a disgrace. It's against th' honor o' this family."

"Whose wearin' th' pants at this house?" says Pa. "Who rules this roost yet? Me, or you, my son!"

"Let me hold my badge until I make th' arrest," says Bert.

"Shore," says Pa, "and I'll send two dad-durned good deputies with you. I'll send Tobbie and Jim. You can bring home th' bacon. Then atter that we'll have one o' th' dad-durndest weddin's that ever took place among th' hills. We'll dance all night. I'll do the fiddlin'. I jist want th' folks around here to see a real dancer no-how. Th' next County Champean! We'll have two county Champeans in this one family! We'll get rid o' old Jim Pratt too. Then we'll have everything our way! We can sell th' gallons then!"

"I don't like it," says Brother Tobbie, "that Ida o' all th' men would marry a man with th' Mark o' th' Beast on his hands!"

"Better that," says Brother Jim to Brother Tobbie, "than a Pratt. Better to marry a son o' Satan than a Pratt."

"He's been converted," says Pa. "Jist don't ever tell anybody he's ever been in th' business. Jist don't let it be known. That's fer this family to keep. I know Bert's heart is right. I've jist got some questions to ast him."

Pa turned to Bert and says: "Young man, you ain't goin' to take Ida to Peoria air you?"

"No," says Bert.

"Can you plow?" says Pa.

"Yes," says Bert.

"Which do you favor," says Pa, "bushels or gallons?"

"Gallons," says Bert.

I was so happy. I jist didn't know how I felt. I grabbed Pa. I put my arms around his neck. It was th' first time I ever hugged and kissed Pa.

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He jerked my arms away and says: "What's th' matter with you, Ida? Air you goin' crazy? Kissin' your old Pa's mustache! A purty thing like you kissin' your old Pa!"

Then Pa jist bent over and laughed and laughed. Ma says: "Don't you act like a little child, Bill!"

Then Pa says: "You can't fool Old Bill. I knowed it all th' time. I jist waited fer everything to work out. I'm th' King o' this Hollow with th' dad-durndest best dancer in my family. I'm th' dad-durndest best fiddler that ever resined his bow. I'm th' dad-durndest best moonshiner in these hills. I'll have th' dad-durndest best son-in-law in all these hills. Th' boy has jist come home."



THE OTHER SIDE

For the edification of its readers, THE MERCURY will present in this department from time to time the views of some of those who most sharply disagree with its editorial policy.

AMERICA'S FALSE DEMOCRACY

BY UPTON SINCLAIR

KING LOUIS of France said: "I am the State". That was the system known as Autocracy. The French people overthrew it, and set up a new system, in which they were the State. Instead of being subjects, they became free and equal sharers in sovereignty, collective masters of their own lives and fortunes.

King George of England claimed the right to tax his subjects in America without allowing them representation. The colonists overthrew him, and set up a Republic, in which all were citizens, and in which the governing officials were chosen by free and equal suffrage.

Government by popular consent implies the right and the duty of all citizens to discuss their own affairs, and to organize for the purpose of carrying out their collective will. Consequently, Democracy means

freedom of speech, press, and assemblage.

Because these rights are new in the world, and have been won only by sacrifice and suffering, Democracy means a crusading spirit; it means active sympathy with all other peoples struggling for freedom. When it ceases to mean that, the spirit of Democracy is already dying.

Many enemies threaten the system of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Autocrats and dictators see in it a threat to their principles, an insult to their majesty. They see a chance to feed their own vanity, and to divert the minds of their subjects at home, by seizing the lands of other peoples. Because dictators can strike quickly, whereas self-governing processes are necessarily slower, friends of Democracy have to

spend their lives upon a watch-tower, crying out warnings. Readers of Capitalist magazines, pledged to the defense of privilege, have to learn to recognize traps set for their minds.

Our forefathers understood Democracy as something applying to government; they never dreamed that it might some day have application to industry. But in the century-and-a-half which has passed since our American Revolution, new inventions have revolutionized industry; the village blacksmith has been replaced by the steel trust, the village candlemaker by the power trust, the family stocking by the Wall Street credit monopoly. The town crier, as a source of news, has been replaced by gigantic publishing enterprises, operated for profit and not for the general welfare.

So a new Autocracy has arisen in the world; the private ownership of the means whereby we get our daily bread, and the management of those resources and instruments in the interest of the private owners. To many millions of Americans today the right to own land means the right to be dispossessed from a tenement room; the right to labor means the right to obey the orders of a corporation foreman, and if you do not like them, to seek some

other foreman no more polite. In short, liberty means the right to starve, and to wander the highways in search of a job, and to be arrested by the police as a vagrant and put to work on a road gang.

And when these Americans attempt to protest against such an interpretation of Democracy, they find that freedom of the press means the right of a newspaper to misquote them, and to throw their protests into the trash-basket; that freedom of speech means the right of wealthy publishers to slander the people's cause and all who presume to defend it; that freedom of assemblage means the right of owners of halls to refuse to rent halls to "Reds", and to write their own definition of the word.

So, in spite of themselves, the American people are being compelled to form a new concept of Democracy and to prepare themselves, under God, for a new birth of freedom. They are learning that liberty without bread is a lie, and that Democracy without money in your pocket is an exploiter's fantasy and a demagog's opportunity.

The system of Autocracy which prevails in American industry today, and which is so ardently defended by THE AMERICAN MERCURY, is in all essentials the same as that which drove our forefathers to

revolt. In the automobile industry, Mr. Henry Ford is the State just as much as King Louis ever was in France—and just as fully convinced of his divine right. When Mr. Girdler, Mr. Weir, and Mr. Rand fix the wages of their workers without consulting them, and fix the prices of their products without consulting the consumer, they are exercising the very same powers of taxation without representation by which King George of England brought on the American Revolution.

So long as human beings have to have food, clothing, and shelter in order to live, just so long will freedom and Democracy be incompatible with the private ownership and autocratic control of the instruments and means of production.

A nation which has Democracy in its political affairs and Autocracy in its industrial and financial affairs is a house divided against itself, a house built upon sand, a pyramid resting upon its apex. The two systems by their very nature are driven to war one upon the other; and there will never again be peace in America, or anywhere else in the

world, until the right to fix the wages and the prices of products has been taken over by the people, and is administered under a system of industrial government by popular consent. There will never again be effective freedom of speech until the publication of news and opinion has been taken out of the hands of profit-seekers, and made the responsibility of co-operative groups, with the right to form such groups at will being guaranteed by law. In my opinion the most reactionary force in America today is the Capitalist press; and present company is *not* excepted!

We cannot make our government work today because it is bought away from us by our industrial and financial masters. We shall never again be able to control government until we have deprived individuals of the power to exploit labor, and to use the gains of exploitation and speculation to corrupt legislators, judges, and political machines.

The cure for the evils of Democracy is more Democracy. The cure for the evils of political Democracy is Democracy in industry.



THE STATE OF THE UNION

By ALBERT JAY NOCK

Down the Rat-Hole

I SEE that the epidemic of armament "for defense" has moved from Europe to America, like the post-war influenza, and is now raging in the Union. The prospects seem to show that there is nothing to be done about it but to let it run its course, for the cry of "defense" always starts a panic as promptly as an alarm of fire in a theatre. We all remember how we were stampeded by the cry of "preparedness" twenty years ago, when the European war was on. Reason, judgment, common sense, all went by the board in what we now know was nothing but a plain case of jitters. Similarly at the present moment it would be quite useless to attempt stemming the rush of mob-fear and mob-superstition, because wherever fear and superstition come in, reason and common sense go out. Fortunately for me, my duty does not require me to make any such attempt. A commentator on the state of the Union sees the defense-mania as a purely symptomatic social phenomenon, like the dancing-mania of the Mid-

dle Ages, and his comment is only by way of trying to account for what he sees.

Presumably no one would deny that defense is the first function of government. According to Mr. Jefferson, the primary reason for having any government at all is the protection of the individual citizen in the free exercise and enjoyment of his rights. "To secure these rights," he wrote in the Declaration, "governments are instituted among men." I think the extreme militarist and the extreme pacifist would have no difficulty about coming to an agreement on this fundamental point. The difference between them, as I understand it, is on the secondary point of how, and by what methods, government can best fulfil this primary duty; and I believe they would cordially agree with Mr. Jefferson that defense of the citizen against molestation or aggression is not only the government's duty, but is also its primary duty.

This would be all very well, and there would be no more to say

about it if it could be presumed that governments always do act, and will always act, with no other motive than a purely disinterested regard for the public welfare. Unfortunately this is not the case. A government is made up of jobholders, and these jobholders all belong to a party. The tenure of their jobs is bound up with the party's prospects. Consequently, as Benjamin Franklin remarked in his priceless observations on the party system, jobholders are not primarily interested in the public welfare. They are primarily interested in furthering their own fortunes, and since those depend on the fortunes of their party, their next interest is in the party's prosperity. Whatever interest they may have in the public welfare is strictly subordinate to these two sets of interests and is conditioned by them. As a rule, they will act for the public welfare if, when, and as such action is not inconsistent with the promotion of the party's interest, and thus indirectly of their own; but otherwise they will not, and any presumption to the contrary is illusory.

This fact, which is even more generally obvious now than it was in Benjamin Franklin's day, should be kept in mind always and under all circumstances, and especially when the peace of a country

is said to be threatened. If the threat is real, the people should quite rightly look to the government to do something about it, because first and foremost that is what a government is for; but they should first insist on being shown that it is real, and should also insist on being shown beyond peradventure that the measures which the government proposes to take are in all respects justifiable. I say "being shown" advisedly, for that is what I mean. Merely taking a jobholder's indefinite insinuations at their face value — insinuations such as Mr. Roosevelt put out at Chicago last October, for example — is not "being shown"; far from it. Merely validating a jobholder's estimate of a reasonable policy and procedure is not "being shown". In the first case a jobholder's unsupported word is worthless; and in the second case, giving a government a blank check simply insures its being filled out for every cent the traffic will bear.

This is true by reason of the fact which Franklin so ably discussed. When for any reason a government's prestige is weakened, it at once thinks up some grandiose project for restoring it at public expense. Perhaps it may have been caught out in some uncommonly flagrant rascality; or perhaps a

business depression has set in, and people are grumbling; or any one of many other causes may have made its position shaky. In any case, however, the thing which always happens is that the government immediately discovers some great public need, and announces a large and costly scheme for satisfying it. This suddenly-discovered need may be for roads, it may be for "conservation", it may be for housing or schools or anything, as long as the plea for it is plausible enough to create a satisfactory diversion of popular attention. Thus, for instance, when business was a little dull in England not long ago, and the Tory government began to notice a choppy sea, it suddenly discovered that housing conditions were shocking bad; and again last year, when our own Mr. Roosevelt found blowholes forming in his popularity, he immediately played up the plight of the submerged third of our population who are ill-fed, ill-clad, and ill-housed, and declared that something must be done about it now, now, now.

Diversions like these usually serve their purpose when the government has the political sense to manipulate them adroitly enough, as we say, to "put them over", for there is always a fairly plausible pretext for them. The one diver-

sion, however, which can be invariably counted on to consolidate a government's position and make it impregnable, is the menace of war. If a government can make it appear that there is ever so slight a chance of a collision with some other government which might result in war, all its misfeasances are at once forgotten, and it has the pleasant certainty of remaining in power with a free hand to launch practically any program of "defense" it likes, however extravagant. This diversion being so effective, the temptation to create it is correspondingly great; but the trouble is that it is so seldom practicable in a country like the Union, which has no dangerous neighbors. There has to be a fairly large-scale row going on somewhere, or the immediate prospect of one, in order to give the plea of "defense" any kind of plausibility; and hence it is only at a time like the present that this plea can be successfully worked.

In Europe, where presumably dangerous neighbors abound, the case is different; it can be worked almost anywhere there at almost any time, and it is now being worked to the limit. It is not for me to say whether the plea of "defense" in England and in the European countries is justified by

probable fact, or whether it is a diversion. I am not entitled to an opinion about that. There are certain striking coincidences here and there which make one suspect that it may not be always and altogether justified, but it is not an outsider's business to say how much they amount to. In either case, however, it is competent for any one to observe the extent to which this plea is working, and to reckon up the amount of economic loss and damage which it entails.

England, for example, proposes to spend in the next fiscal year over half-a-billion dollars on the one item of mechanizing her army; which is nearly a million-and-a-quarter more than the whole cost of the army in the present year. On the day I write this, the newspapers are publishing an unofficial statement that the English government will shortly place orders for armament to the tune of a billion-and-a-half dollars. The French Cabinet has raised the ante on "defense" by four-and-a-half billion francs. Hungary chips in with about a hundred-and-fifty million, to be raised chiefly out of a capital levy on fortunes exceeding \$10,000. Even Norway comes to the front for something like ten million, and thinks it may need more. I mention these few figures merely to give

some little idea of the enormous aggregate of economic difficulties which the defense-mania in Europe is piling up against the future — difficulties which are increasing every day in every country, and which are now on the very point of portending universal ruin, for these prodigious expenditures are for wholly non-productive purposes; they will not produce a single dollar's worth of new wealth, and therefore they amount simply to putting that much money down a rat-hole.

In the Union, such coincidences as I have said are occasionally noticeable in Europe are too impressive to leave any doubt that the demand for "defense" is a pure diversion, got up to meet the exigencies of the election this autumn. The first of these coincidences appeared last October, when Mr. Roosevelt suddenly discovered that the Japanese were doing dreadful things in China; things which they had been doing for six years, apparently unnoticed by him. Again, it was when he was faced by a recalcitrant and troublesome Congress that he as suddenly discovered our need for a larger navy, in view of the disturbed condition of the world. Again, it was when the slump in business began to look like a real slump, that he found this

need for a new navy to be actually quite pressing. He did not say just why it is so pressing nor, indeed, why any such need exists; nor can any one say, for the only conceivable need is a political need, for party purposes.

It is pretty generally acknowledged now, as Mr. Chamberlain said the other day, that in war there are no winners. When I came back to the Union from Europe in 1916, saying that whoever won the war would lose it, I hardly expected to live long enough to see my prediction come true, but I have done so with some time to spare. There is no longer any such thing as winning a war, if indeed there ever was. What now remains to be learned is that the economic dislocations caused by ruinous programs of "defense" are so complete that if they are allowed to go on, they soon leave nothing worth defending. I imagine that the present run of the defense-mania will give a conspicuous proof of this before it ends, but it will then be too late. We have learned that war is an utterly ineffectual way of dealing with international squabbles, and that some better way must be found; and we are now seeing that defense by armies and navies is too expensive, and that some cheaper means must be employed, unless

we are prepared to face indefinitely a state of unexampled poverty and wretchedness such as that which is so fast destroying the peoples of militant foreign lands.

This matter of national defense would take on an entirely different aspect if peoples could be brought to understand that the only government they need to defend themselves against is their own government, and that the only way to defend themselves against it is by continual distrust and vigilance. It is a rather bitter reflection on human imbecility that the world could be reduced to permanent peace tomorrow, if by some magic its peoples could be made to transfer to their own governments all the fear, hatred, and incessant suspicion which they bestow on other governments. It is their own governments which have the power to hurt and despoil and destroy them. Other governments have no such power; and if all the peoples once perceived this, there would be no wars and no need of further defense against war.

Suppose, for example, that when Herr Hitler came to the front, instead of making him a sort of Brummagem tribal god, the Germans had said to him, "Now see here, Adolf, old *Kamerad*, we are willing you should do our dirty

work for us if you wish, but you will find us very hard masters. We will stand by you for anything in reason, but we are afraid of you and have no love for you and would not trust you as far as we could throw a bull by the tail, nor shall we take your unsupported word for anything under any circumstances. We propose to watch you like a cat at a rat-hole, and at the first sign of any jiggery-pokery, down you go. If you attend strictly to business and behave yourself, we shall do the handsome thing by you when you retire, but not one minute before."

Then suppose, while the Germans were ticking off Herr Hitler in this fashion, the French were saying to M. Blum or M. Daladier or whoever happened to be in office at the moment, "*Dites donc, mon vieux*, do you hear what the boys across the border are telling their hired man? Well, that goes for you, too, and if you know when you are well off, you will take it carefully to heart, because if you don't, we are afraid the future looks a little

dark for you." Then suppose meanwhile the English were saying the same thing to Mr. Chamberlain, Italians to M. Mussolini, Americans to Mr. Roosevelt, and so on all around the world. No war could possibly be got up under those conditions, and "defense" would go by the board.

That was Mr. Jefferson's idea of a people's right attitude toward their government; an attitude of unceasing dislike, outspoken distrust, and jealous watchfulness. The wise old man never uttered a truer word than when he wrote to a friend that unless the people resolutely maintained that attitude, "you and I and Congresses and Assemblies, judges and governors, shall all become wolves". Why, then, should any citizen of the Union waste his time on fear and hatred of the wolves in foreign sheepfolds — wolves which are neither harming him nor likely ever to harm him — and meanwhile give the wolves in his own fold *carte blanche* to do him all the harm they choose to do?



BACK TO NATURE

BY ALAN DEVOE

The Way of the Wild

ON THE DAY this is written, the newspapers carry tall tales of ferocity in Europe and Asia. There is blood on the wind. Five times, in the editorials of today's newspapers, occur variations on a single theme, and it is this: that men are reverting to the ways of beasts. The laws of the jungle are being revived. Man is becoming no better than the brutes. Civilization is relapsing into the way of the wild.

Upon a great many ears, no doubt, these similes and metaphors fall with no spurious ring. Men hear them, and nod agreeably, and think that they have heard a phrase well-turned. To dentists, perhaps, they sound like sensible stuff, and quite likely they appear sage and incontrovertible to congressmen and subway guards and numerous suburban ministers. But these familiar turns of speech might, I think, have got no endorsement from John Burroughs. I think that Muir — that grave old man with the Sierras in his heart — would have found them feeble stuff and

none too sensible. They are phrases designed for a city-dwelling age and attuned to an urban ear. To any man who truly knows the "brutes" . . . any man who has got his knowledge of the winged and furred and scaled co-denizens of the planet at first hand . . . they are only so much misty-minded oratory.

We suffer from dreadful delusions of grandeur, we pale bipedal mammals, and exhibit an almost infinite capacity for self-deceit; and nowhere do we show this dismal proficiency to greater advantage than in the addled complacency with which we look down upon our non-human relatives. By inferences from our traditional theology, and from such odd criteria as mechanical ingeniousness, we have built up a fantastic mass-belief that as a tribe we are incomparably superior to bats and woodpeckers and beavers and weasels. Overwhelmed by our own cleverness in building skyscrapers and inventing explosives and creating philosophies, we have got to the insuffer-

able pass where we fancy ourselves to be the lords of the earth, and where we have only a kind of contemptuous apathy toward those other and lesser tribes of creatures that pass their simple days under the sun without ever perfecting a depth-bomb or contriving a poison gas.

What actually is happening in Europe and Asia today, of course, is not that men are behaving more and more like beasts. What is happening is precisely the contrary, and is simply that men are behaving more and more like men. That is to say, they are simply exhibiting in full-flowered form those habits and characteristics and behavior-patterns which are attributes exclusively of human beings. They are displaying those hallmarks of conduct by which man may infallibly be distinguished from every other creature under heaven; they are revealing those aspects of personality which are the unique identifying-mark of *Homo sapiens*.

The gentler and prettier accomplishments, like music and art, and the lovelier virtues, like affection and sacrifice, are not reserved solely to mankind. The black and yellow oriole in the apple orchard can also make music; the lean-flanked coyote, a-prowl for a mate, can also sing a song. If no soft-pawed wood-

chuck has yet painted a Madonna or designed a City Hall, it is not to say that there is no art among the non-human. The glossy rooks that play with multicolored bits of glass have an esthetic instinct which is only dimmer than our own, but not qualitatively different; and the brute gorillas in the jungle have invented and mastered a technique of tying knots. And let any man, before he prattle too vain-gloriously of love and loyalty and sacrifice, reflect upon the behavior of dogs.

No, these things are not the sweet and special stigmata by which man alone is marked. The brand which marks him unmistakably a man is of another sort entirely. He, and he only, of all the beings that walk or fly or creep or crawl or swim, is capable of killing his fellows wantonly, out of malice and out of lust. It is only he, of all the denizens of forest and plain and meadow, who can with knowledgeable mind abuse and degrade his flesh, and there is no other beast or bird or fish that has the same flair for concerted cruelty. It is the gruesome badge of the human race that they, and they alone, wilfully pervert every endowment that has been bestowed upon them, and are uniquely wont to impose their will by violence upon their fellows.

There is a gluttony in man unmatched in any other quarter.

II

These are the facts that present themselves to every naturalist, and these are the truths that are proclaimed in a great voice by every field and copse and woodland. For all our skyscrapers and subways and ingenious houses, there are mirrorings in every beaver-dam and tortuous mole-burrow and down-lined goldfinch nest; for all our arts and crafts and inventions and devices there are counterparts in the non-human realms of nature. Our technical skill, our ingenuity and cunning, are only quantitatively greater. That is all. But for our special lusts and rapacities and degradations, there are no mirrorings whatever. In our vanity, our heartless pride, we show a faculty which has no place at all in the life-stuffs of the furred and feathered company. Our matchless avarice is a thing entirely unique. Down through the long millennia no Hitler has yet risen up among the white-tailed deer; no race of squirrels or chipmunks has yet been cowed and put in thrall by a bushy-tailed Stalin. Ours are such wild delusions and such bloody-handed strifes as never

yet have manifested themselves in any community in field or forest.

There are great and grave issues implicit here. The naturalist turns them over gladly to the theologians, whose special province it is to explain, after their various fashions, the reason why the sons of God are so uniquely tinged with all this special evil and malevolence. But this much, at least, it is the naturalist's right (and duty, I think) to say: that we have fallen into an absurd and dangerous error when we think that a human tyranny is a relapsing into the way of the wild, and when we begin constructing woodland analogies for the red ruthlessness of human dictators. That kind of analogy is a wishful self-deceit.

It might, I think, be a not unhealthy thing if we were to desist a while from our proud condescension toward the other animals, and were to try, instead, to be a little more like them. It is not entirely impossible that Francisco Franco might be a pleasanter man if he could cultivate a little of the drowsy benevolence of the woodchucks that doze and munch and scamper in my pasture-lot; and I find it wholly thinkable that Benito Mussolini could win a fonder following among men of good-will were he to confine his

conquering activities to such quick clean necessary slaughters as those of our hungry hawks. Even as these words are written, the air of the countryside is full of the sounds of preying . . . the shrill cry of circling hawks, the chatter of grub-hunting sparrows, the bass chorus of insect-hungry frogs. But it is a chorus that strikes no sick horror to the heart. It is an honest sound. To hear a truly dreadful thing, it is necessary to cock an ear for echoes from across the ocean . . . the far-off booming of man's own ingenious cannon, the rumble of his clever tanks, the scream of two-legged creatures butchered wilfully for no better reasons than lust and cruelty and hate.

Were we an honest kind of creature than we are, and a little less inflated in our invincible pride, I think that every chipmunk frolicking in a cedar-stump might make us bow our heads in bitter shame. I think that we might walk abroad, into a wooded place, and stand there penitent and full of an unassuageable humiliation.

The Back-To-Nature doctrine, so often and so gravely miscomprehended, does not demand that Man deliberately renounce the graces and subtleties of his culture, and seek instead to live naked in

the forest like a wolf. It does demand that his morals be informed by that Universal Moral which infects the universe, and which shows forth in Nature as a moral untainted by the kind of malicious cruelty and contrived malignance that creep into men's lives when they remove themselves too far from the homely wisdom of earth. In the life-pattern of bird and beast and fish and tree, the observing man can read the workings of that Will which embraces them all; the paramoecium and the sequoia alike shadow forth the Intention that is behind them. And in so far as man ignores these ancient earth-omens, these symbols which are patent in every cloud and pasture and sprouting seed, to that extent does he violate the ethos of nature and rend (to his peril) the pattern laid down for all living things. Man has an elasticity of will, a free election in behavior, which marks him from his brothers of the wild. But when he degrades this peerless faculty, and canalizes it in processes of cruelty and lust, it is in the profoundest sense a blasphemy to pretend that he is returning to the way of nature. It is not a "return" that he is undertaking, but a dangerous and terrible kind of flight.

THE LIBRARY

Reflections on Book-Reviewing

BY JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

THE Editor said to me: "Why don't you review some books for us? We'll send you your choice of all the books published in the United States every month. What you'll do will be to select a book that interests you, and write us a little article on it, say, two thousand words or so. Anything that comes into your head. Then give us a sentence or two on the others, for the Check List. And we'll pay you such-and-such. How about it?"

I thought, why not? Books have always been the largest single item in my personal expenditures, and when I am moved from place to place in the line of my profession, my library distresses our transportation quartermasters. I can't remember a time when I did not take an active interest in books. My Father, a scholarly man, has a notable library, and of all the rooms in his house, the library was my favorite. Before I could read, I loved to look at pictures: there were the Doré editions of the Bible, the *In-*

ferno, the *Idylls of the King*. There were reproductions of Old Masters in portfolios; and I remember a book, quite large, containing half-tones of the exhibitions at the Chicago World's Fair. I spent hours over a heavy folio called *The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War*, crammed with lithographs, drawings and engravings. And in the nineties the *Century* was publishing Sloane's *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, profusely illustrated. You examined these things flat on your stomach on the rug, under an injunction not to break the backs. And I was curious about the writing around the pictures.

This curiosity drove me early into ambitious reading, but before that, I was being read to. I had my first knowledge of Homer and the Bulfinch mythologies listening by the fire on winter evenings, and met those arresting people of Plutarch and of the Old Testament, whose acts I thought extraordinary material for the narrators: and

others think so, too, for this year, Mr. Franz Werfel is out with a thick book on the Prophet Jeremiah, and Mr. Thomas Mann with a reconstruction of the lives of Joseph and his Brethren. When I had learned my letters, my personal reading was firmly taken in hand. Quite early I went through the Bible and reported duly on what I understood of it. I read Dickens, by order — *David Copperfield* first, and hard going it was, so that I dislike *David Copperfield* to this day, but the rest of Dickens I enjoyed, and every now and then, re-read.

.... In a ruined village near Suippes, where we lay the night the 2nd American (U. S. Regular) Division went up to the Champagne front in October, 1918, I found a cheap edition of *Dombey and Son*, dog-eared but complete. I stuffed it into my *musette* and had great pleasure from it through the next three days, in those intervals between movements, when we lay and waited for what would come. Captain Francis Kerien saw me reading, and said, "After you on that": although he is not a reading man. It sustained him for the rest of our term around Blanc Mont, the most hideous military episode I ever saw. Then a lieutenant borrowed it — his name is

gone from me — and a heavy shell landed on him, so that we found only one boot to bury, and no book at all. But I have oftener wondered who left *Dombey and Son* in Dom-pierre au Temple. Sergeant Alexander Woollcott might have had it, for he was up and down the Front, but he would not have left it anywhere. In July that year our Rainbow Division was on the Champagne Front: maybe it was one of them. Otherwise, Francis and I made much face for reading a book cold-bloodedly under fire, a thing that seemed remarkable to our Marines. . . .

After Dickens, my Father recommended Thackeray, his recommendations carrying the force of general orders; and indeed, without discipline, I do not think I would have persisted. But persist I did, or was caused to, so that Henry Esmond, Major Pendennis, and Colonel Newcome are among my oldest friends. *Vanity Fair* I consider one of the three great novels; the other two being *Les Misérables*, and *War and Peace*: I have found every person I know among the three of them, and try to re-read them every year. There came along, in due course — I requiring progressively less persuasion — Mme. Mühlbach, and Sir Walter Scott and Captain Marryat, Rob-

ert Louis Stevenson and Charles Kingsley, Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, Hawthorne; some of Lord Lytton, whom I never enjoyed; all of Mark Twain. In that Library, *Tom Sawyer*, *Innocents Abroad*, *Life on the Mississippi*, and the *Gilded Age*, are first editions. I recall Bret Harte, Victor Hugo and Eugène Sue, Dumas, Tolstoi, Headley's *Napoleon and His Marshals*. There was much on Napoleon in the Library, and any amount of Civil War memoir and narrative: all the lives of Lee then published, Longstreet's *From Manassas to Appomattox* (autographed), John Esten Cooke, Fitzhugh Lee, Jubal Early, Jefferson Davis, Hood's *Advance and Retreat*: I read them. There were several huge sets of compilations — they used to be sold around by subscription: and in one of them I found Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita*, *A Memory of Last Island*, the finest description of a hurricane anybody ever wrote. There was a man named Topelius (I think) who wrote stories of Gustavus and Charles XII of Sweden, I am not sure of his name, but those were hero-tales: also the Polish trilogy of Sienkiewicz. That brings me to G. A. Henty: I had all the Henty books. But there was never an Alger in the house, and never a

Dime Novel — as they called those bright-covered paper backs the drug stores sold. This, by the way, was the only measure of censorship ever applied to my home reading.

As for poetry, Tennyson and Longfellow were probably the first, and Shakespeare: my Father thought it well for me to memorize at least one selection per week: I could give you now: *I am dying, Egypt, dying! Ebbs the crimson life-tide fast, And the dark Plutonian shadows Gather on the evening blast*. I read Byron, who was exciting; and Wordsworth, who bored me to death; and Sidney Lanier, and Walt Whitman, and some of the New England group — except Longfellow, we did not think much of the New England group in that house. We didn't like their politics. Kipling was publishing in those years, and my Father bought him as he came out. Bought me also, starting very early, a lot of natural history, particularly bird books. Those, by the way, were the horse-and-buggy days, and when my Father drove out to the farm, I went along; at first, to open the gates; then to drive: I could always manage horses. And we talked about books, as much as anything else. (When our people progressed beyond the kindly two-horse team

and the pleasant country roads, and thoughtful leisurely movement, they lost something. Now they go too fast either to see or think.)

The point I would make is, that by the time I was fifteen, and went away to school, I had done my most important reading, and established my literary standards. I still read, of course, by habit if not otherwise. But I believe I remember more exactly the books I read before fifteen, than since. Sheila Kaye-Smith¹ remarks in her *Three Ways Home* that, by the time a writer is fifteen, he has stocked his mind (or hers), so far as practical use goes: all the trends are established. She quotes Compton Mackenzie to the effect that the mind is stocked by the age of twenty-one. I think myself that they are both right: somewhere between those ages you finish your basic accumulations.

I don't remember, today, much of what I read in school. Off-hand, Fiona McLeod, and disassorted poets. But I put on a uniform at the age of twenty-four, and the profession of arms led me through a wide range of biography; and military, political, and economic history; and collateral branches of

soldiering, that have to do with geography, ethnology, and diplomacy. If there is a human activity in which, at one time or another, soldiers have not been involved, I don't know what it is. For pleasure, there is always fiction, picked up at random; and some poetry: but I am deficient in philosophy, and weak on economics: I lack a statistical mind. And I've shied away from the inspirational and the uplifting: you don't really need to read that stuff, if you look around you as you go.

In brief, I felt I could claim a basis for a few definite ideas about books and writing; and although my equipment might be lop-sided, I would know what I liked. So I said to the Editor: "All right: why not?"

II

The books began to arrive, by mail and by express. They sent me weekly lists, and I indicated as many as I thought I could get through. I have selected fewer each week, by the way. I found one thing, inescapably: you cannot tell what a book is, by the title or by the author's name: you can't get much from the two-line synopsis that my editor furnishes with each book. You select blindly, and you

¹ *Three Ways Home*, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. \$2.50. Harpers.

are stabbing in the dark. It makes rather a gamble; and it's fun: but it brings more of disappointment than of satisfaction. The best way to select your books is to go to a book-store and browse.

I believe the first book I chose for review was a life of Genghis Khan: it was not a very good book, nor was it in any respect equal to its immense subject. I know of no book on Genghis that is, save perhaps the rare and expensive Howorth's *History of the Mongols*. Yet it recalled to me the little I saw, and what I learned, of Central Asia, from which the Mongols erupted to shake the world; and to which they have receded; and where their race is now dying, nibbled away by Chinese market-gardeners, by Japanese imperialists, and by the corrosive influences of the Soviets. I enjoyed writing about it: and if I stimulated a few people to look the fellow up in the Encyclopedia, and to read Lamb and Vladimirtsov and Jeremiah Curtin, in addition to Mr. Fox, I at least introduced them to one of the most remarkable human creatures who ever lived.

. . . . When each lot of books came in, I entered them: title, author, publisher, price, in a note-book. I kept the note-book handy, and as I read, I made the nec-

essary notes. I read rapidly, and I read whenever my regular job, and my daily arrangements, grant me time. I always read myself to sleep. I have snatched many a chapter while Leda finishes dressing, before we go out, of an evening. If you improve your time, it's astonishing how many books you can get through in a month: and a book is like an egg: you don't have to eat all of an egg to learn that the egg is bad: but — scrambling metaphors — you must eat some of it: you can't go by the blurbs — as they call the publishers' enticements on the dust-covers. If you accept the blurb, you must believe that each work of fiction is the great novel of the year, informed with beauty, pity, and terror; and that each serious book here settles, for all time, this or that question which has puzzled the human race since the beginning. Therefore I have honestly tried, in the Check List for the general, to sum up concisely the factual and literary merits — frequently two different things — of the book as I saw them: and in my editor's "one little article" I have set down at length my detailed impressions from the reading. Thus a very routine life of Rockefeller, thrown together by a capable journalist, evoked in all their horrors the weeks, in the

Rockefeller Foundation in Peking, my son endured the rigors of a double mastoid. That was an easy thing to write: it flowed out of my fingers.

Again, one month they sent me an edition of the Bible, arranged in modern convention by a very clever man.¹ The Bible is one of my favorite works, and I found this edition splendid. But when I came to transfer my impressions to other people — which is the writer's mission — I found I didn't know anything about the Bible, at all. With the voluminous discussion in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as my guide, and the Library of Congress at my disposal, I informed myself authoritatively, for the first time in my life, on the origins and assembly of the King James Version. I don't know how my readers — if any — reacted to the article; for it is granted me that I never follow up a thing. Once the editor receives it I'm through, and I go on to something else. But I had great benefit from writing that essay.

In fiction, over the period of a year, I recall now only two novels. One was: *And So — Victoria*.² Structurally, it was every thing a

novel shouldn't be. The style was turgid and verbose, the incidents profoundly improbable. But it was as entertaining a story as I ever read, and I wish I could strike it new again. The other was Cloete's *Turning Wheels*,³ a tale of South Africa. . . . When I was young, I enjoyed H. Rider Haggard. *Alan Quartermain* was a character whom I admired immensely; there has never been any other person so adequate to the occasion. *She, King Solomon's Mines* — in my teens I read them to tatters. Well, here was Mr. Quartermain's Africa. It drove me to the histories, to study the Great Trek of the Boers, and before I was through with it, I had refreshed myself on the background and the causes of the South African War, and renewed my information on the war itself. And its writing was a joy. Nothing like it has come out of Africa save from Olive Schreiner. Mr. Cloete should have more stories of that fabulous land, for his style is vivid. There's so much fiction that makes you wonder how on earth the publisher expects to get his money back.

Of scientific things — my editor sends me such, on his own account — I remember *Apes, Men and*

¹ *The Bible, Designed To Be Read As Living Literature*. Edited by Ernest Sutherland Bates. \$3.75. Simon & Schuster.

² *And So — Victoria*, by W. V. Wilkins. \$2.50. Macmillan.

³ *The Turning Wheels*, by Stuart Cloete. \$2.50. Houghton Mifflin.

Morons,¹ a most sprightly and pungent book. I tried to write an article on it, and have not succeeded. I couldn't, somehow, establish an angle of approach. But it was written for folks with just my ignorance of paleontology.

In the line of historical research, the field is broader. It seems to me that Americans are doing that sort of thing today better than they have ever done it. If I have had a bias in this book affair, it is a nationalistic one—however deplorable that may be. I like to see Americans write about America; for I consider that our native material is as rich as any on earth. And I have let no chance slip to commend such things, wherever it was possible. Certain of our University Presses are proceeding most meritoriously along these lines. Things particularly admirable are coming out of North Carolina, and out of the Southwest. We do not, I fear, think of Oklahoma as a cultural center: but I know of no more useful and admirable publishing list than that of the *University of Oklahoma Press*.

Somehow, the American biographies are not so good. I don't consider that a biographer should be entirely impartial: it's not in nature

for him to be, for when he lives with a man long enough to really know him, he develops a sort of maternal complex towards him. But a biographer can be detached, and he can cultivate the technique of selectivity: and therein most of our current biographies fail. As I write, I recall two very fine ones: a life of Christopher Marlowe,² a marvel of patient digging and skilful presentation: and another of Philip II,³ excellently documented, but done from an evident pro-Catholic and pro-Philip slant. It makes Philip II a very different gentleman from the monster in Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, and in the several protestant histories of the Conquests, and in the vivacious works of Mr. Charles Kingsley. Impartiality, it seems to me, is an inhuman virtue, incompatible with friendship or any other warm quality of the heart or mind—I recall a scrap of conversation from an old Southwestern I know. . . . "*So this Bud Jackson killed him, and when I heard about it, I went down to El Paso to get myself on the jury, in Bud's trial. That's what friends are for. . . .*"

Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* is

² *Christopher Marlowe: The Man In His Time*, by John Bakeless. \$3.75. Morrow.

³ *Philip II*, by William Thomas Walsh. \$5.00. Sheed & Ward.

¹ *Apes, Men and Morons*, by E. A. Hooton. \$3.00. Putnam's.

not impartial, and probably not Frederick either, but it is a magnificent piece of work. Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee* is far from impartial, but the material is all assembled and it is the most impressive American biography of my time. He loves General Lee and he reveres him, but he knows Lee better than anybody living, so why not? No, if you learn enough about a man to be able to reconstruct his life, you have taken that man into your heart. It seems to me you should — undertaking a biography — know all there is to know about the man and his background; present — since life is fleeting — all the material that matters but no more; show, if you like, the way you feel about it; indicate your sources; and let the reader use his own judgment: that's his least reward, for bearing with you. And with the analytical and debunking school of biographers, I have no patience at all.

III

Criticism has its functions and its limitations. The act of criticism I do not enjoy. If you have done some writing yourself, you are reminded that this novelist — biographer — annalist — whatever the

poor fellow is, has of necessity worked something of his own soul into the book; and that the book becomes a sort of sentient thing. Where one can praise honestly, it is pleasant; otherwise, I had rather say, Oh, he's done the best he could — which is in itself a form of criticism; as falling asleep at the theatre is in fact a critical comment on the play. There have been critics who elevated the letters of their day and generation: it is said that Poe did so. But the ideal critic, I think, must have a good deal of sadism in his cosmos. As a soldier, I hate needless suffering: nor do I aspire to critical laurels. On reflection, if I have served a purpose, it has been only to make a gesture towards books I have found amusing.

At any rate, you get reactions. Your mail will contain novelties, for there are invariably people with leisure and inclination to put matters right. Usually they are good-natured and courteous; but sometimes they are neither the one nor the other. I remember the admonitions hurled upon me when I ventured to suggest that a certain German Jew, a novelist of reputation, now, I understand, refugeeing, had sacrificed his really superb art-form to the interests of racial propaganda: *smug* was the least offensive adjective his kindred in

this country applied to me. And there was the learned savant who named me a deliberate fabricator, and worse: I was able to establish, to my own satisfaction, at least, that he couldn't have read the book in question with any attention at all. But such things show that you are being read, and I find them valuable, especially the ones that indicate errors.

Looking back across the year, I find two conclusions outstanding. One is, that the compulsion to meet

a monthly date-line runs the days together like beads on a string: it is no time at all from this twenty-first to the next one. The other is, that a reviewer assumes one inescapable obligation: he must know, or learn, enough of the given subject to evaluate the writer's work in the light of the writer's aim. I've found it quite educational, the past twelve months; as much as any in my life. And it is the thing that is wearying me of reviewing: I have to do too much collateral reading.

THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from front advertising section)

BIOGRAPHY

★★★★THE STORY OF MELINA RORKE, by Melina Rorke. \$2.75. *Greystone Press*. A red-headed girl of fourteen escapes from a South African convent with an Irish rugger player: eleven years later she is decorated by King Edward VII and acclaimed the "Florence Nightingale of the Boer War." Melina Rorke's autobiography is an extraordinary personal record, vivid, simple, and human. It is a book hard to put down, and harder to forget.

★★★ON MY OWN, by Mary Knight. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. A United Press reporter sets down memoirs of her journalistic experiences. Miss Knight has good stories to tell, and the talent for telling them well. Her point of view is refreshing, because — un-

like many of her co-workers who have recently been frothing into print — she keeps it unbiased.

★★★R. F. D., by Charles Allen Smart. \$2.50. *Norton*. Fluently-written bucolic autobiography of a Pinko who has gone back to the family farm to work the good earth. He is learning how to be a horny-handed son of toil — though still a little uninformed on the period of gestation of Cocker Spaniels and the spelling of BB shot — but he can't understand why his successful native neighbors don't want to be told by the government how to farm their own land and run their own lives. And he never will. His book, however, should be read by everyone who wants to know what America and

Americans are going to be like twenty years from today; such a picture will be found only between the lines, but it is distinct, indelible, and convincing.

★★★ **BEYOND DARK HILLS**, by Jesse Stuart. \$3.50. *Dutton*. An autobiography of the young poet and fictioneer from the head of W-Hollow, Kentucky, several of whose first short stories appeared in *THE MERCURY*. Mr. Stuart's chief asset, aside from the poetry of his prose, is the convincing authenticity of his material and the workings of his mind. As a writer, however, he has yet to learn the virtue of form. He sprawls all over his pages. This habit may be becoming in a novice: but it is fatal to the serious artist. Mr. Stuart ought to purchase a big blue pencil, give half of it to Thomas Wolfe, and go at his writing the hard way.

★★★ **AARON BURR**, by Nathan Schachner. \$3.50. *Stokes*. An unusual and revealing biography of the man who is one of the blackest characters in American history — according to the school books. Mr. Schachner presents a frequently-plausible case to prove that Burr was a man of great ability and entirely innocent of the charges of treason brought against him. While the author makes the mistake of attempting a complete whitewash of his hero, at the same time he unquestionably demonstrates the erroneousness of the accepted opinion of Burr. The lustrous characters of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton are presented in a new light which leaves them somewhat tarnished. Despite its cardinal fault of attempting to make Burr a better man than he probably was, this is a biography which should be read by every student of American history. It is engagingly written and will be intensely interesting to the general reader also.

★★★ **THE IDEALISM OF GIOVANNI GENTILE**, by Roger W. Holmes. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. A fresh consideration of the Italian idealist and his philosophy, from

the able pen of an American scholar who has studied the Italian movement at first hand.

★★★ **"COMING SIR"**: The Autobiography of a Waiter, by Dave Marlowe. \$2.50. *Lippincott*. The lives of an English waiter, who plied his craft in hotels and restaurants in London and New York, and aboard transatlantic liners. He had his experiences with liquor-smuggling during Prohibition, and he had his contacts with gangsters in Manhattan's speakeasies, somewhat to his bewilderment. Also, he observed the antics of his many customers. His narrative is set down with insight and intelligence, and a sly humor.

★★★ **STRONG MAN OF CHINA**, by Robert Berkow. \$3.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. A studious and readable biography of Chiang Kai-Shek, the best yet published. Recommended to persons interested in the events now convulsing Asia.

★★★ **THE MARKET PLACE**, by Alexander Dana Noyes. \$3.50. *Little, Brown*. The present financial editor of the *New York Times* reviews the past fifty years of American life, as seen from the vantage point to which his journalistic talents brought him; and an excellent vantage point it has been. A fine book, with much pace and detail, charting our times in the manner of an economist's graph, for when the markets went up, so did our national achievements, and vice versa. The thread of politics is clear cut, too: out of Wall Street came the sinews of Presidential elections. The financial future looks dark to this commentator, shadowed by the New Deal's upside-down technique. But he is optimistic: America holds the world's economic leadership. Other observers have pointed out that we are doing our best to lose it.

★★★ **RUDYARD KIPLING'S VERMONT FEUD**, by Frederic Van de Water. \$1.25. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. The now-it-can-be-told account of a *cause célèbre* which cost

America the tenancy of a distinguished literary visitor, whose writings might have been fashioned differently had he remained on these shores. Mr. Van de Water narrates a remarkable story, carrying the note of authenticity: Kipling's brother-in-law had a grudge, and he sought to exercise it with his fists. So far, so good. That is the American way. But the keen observer will note that Kipling, from the time of his arrival in Vermont, committed two errors: he minded his own business meticulously — and *he dressed for dinner every evening*. Therefore he was suspect — a sinister man, an enemy of rugged American democracy. And therefore he was crucified. The story of his fall from grace, his public trial, and the mockery which engulfed him is depressing reading. Mr. Kipling paid high penalty for being a gentleman.

★★★ THE SUMMING UP, by W. Somerset Maugham. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. Interesting and stimulating *apologia pro vita maughami*. The book will doubtless be of more interest to the literary profession than to the author's vast Tauchnitz and Cosmopolitan audience. The first two-thirds of the volume is as keen a commentary on the life of the artist as has recently been published: the last third, in which Mr. Maugham rolls in his private metaphysics, is hard going for the reader and even a little embarrassing.

★★ TWENTIETH CENTURY COMPOSERS, by David Ewen. \$3.00. *Crowell*. The worthies of modern music are here: Stravinsky, Strauss, Elgar, Sibelius, Ravel, Prokofieff, de Falla, Loeffler, Bartók, Bloch, Delius, Hindemith, Schönberg, Malipiero, Harris, Williams, and Gershwin. Some biography of each, some intimate detail, some criticism, and some praise. A balanced assayment, of value to music-lovers and students.

★★ THE KAISER ON TRIAL, by George Sylvester Viereck. \$3.50. *Greystone Press*. Mr. George Sylvester Viereck arraigns the former Emperor and King before the high

bar of History. Did he will the war; cause that hectacomb wantonly; and loose rape, murder, arson, and barratry over the earth and the seas around the earth? The verdict will be: No, he didn't. But Mr. Viereck does the Squire of Doorn House no unalloyed service in showing him invariably virtuous; yet uniformly ignorant of what it was all about, as well as ineffective.

★★ THE PROFESSIONAL THIEF, by a Professional Thief. Annotated and Interpreted by Edwin H. Sutherland. \$2.50. *University of Chicago*. A sociological study, interesting and conceivably valuable. Theft is not, apparently, a social malformation, but a normal human activity, as ancient as man. The book raises more questions than it solves, but it is an honest attempt to estimate a situation that has always been with us, and looks permanent.

★★ JOAQUIN MILLER, by Martin Severin Peterson. \$2.50. *Stanford University Press*. Full-length portrayal of the literary frontiersman whose character was marked by contradictions, and not a little eccentricity. The biography is on the favorable side; but then, the poet of the Golden West had his moments. The research involved in this book was considerable: the author has collated his data expertly, to give a moving, continuous picture.

★★ ENCORE, by Daniel Frohman. \$3.00. *Lee Furman*. Rambling biographical sketches by a dean of the American theater, chronicled in uneven style, with many asides. The bulk of the book concerns great thespians of the past, but there are interpolations relating to stage problems of today.

★★ LOST EMPIRE, by Hector Chevigny. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Something of the life, loves, and adventures of Nikolai Petrovich Rezánov, aide to Alexander I, who dreamed of a great empire in the North Pacific, built upon the fur trade. The author has larded considerable fiction into his biography, to the detriment of the latter.

★★ JOHN JAY CHAPMAN AND HIS LETTERS, by M. A. De Wolfe Howe. \$4.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. Adequate biography of a stuffed shirt. Chapman was a professional dilettante, and wrote voluminously to no purpose. This portrait of him is sympathetic; but one feels that the biographer had no profound admiration for his subject.

★★ PAINT AND PREJUDICE: The Life of an Artist, by C. R. W. Nevinson. \$3.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. The vivacious memoirs of Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson, very generally held to be one of the first living English artists: certainly *he* thinks so. His parents were people of unusual gifts, that were transmitted. His was the generation of the War, which he saw from the ambulance and hospital angles; so that his pictures of it, acclaimed by soldiers, evoked the wrath and envy of his colleagues. A victim of much ill-health, he shows himself in his maturity slightly hypochondriac, slightly paranoiac, and frankly an egoist. His recollections make sprightly reading: after all, artists are different.

★ ANATOLE FRANCE, by Edwin Preston Dargan. \$5.00. *Oxford University Press*. A professional scholar's biography, of interest only to other professional scholars: trivia piled on trivia; ten years of pains-taking research; 792 pages of unreadable prose. Perhaps such books are necessary for the progress of civilization. And, then again, perhaps not.

★ AMERICAN WOMEN, Volume II, 1937-1938. \$10.00 *American Publications, Inc.* Revised edition of Who's Who among the Republic's noted women, with brief biographies of each, and statistics concerning such topics as political affiliation, age distribution, occupation, hobbies, recreations, etc. A useful reference book.

★ JOHN CARLISLE KILGO, by Paul Neff Garber. \$3.00. *Duke University Press*. Biography of the president of Trinity College at Durham, North Carolina, now

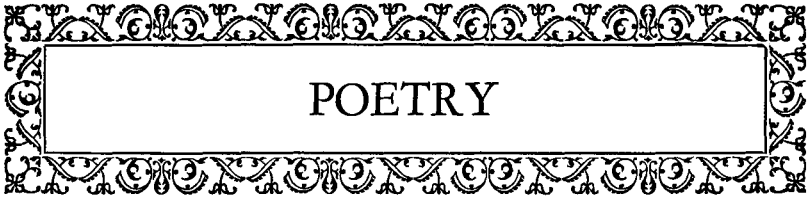
known as Duke University, through the years 1894-1910. Dr. Kilgo was a Liberal in thought and act; much that is now educational history in the South stemmed from his efforts. Mr. Garber has performed a capable task in this book, one of those to be published in connection with Duke's forthcoming centennial observance.

★ ASTROPHEL, by Alfred H. Bill. \$3.50. *Farrar & Rinehart*. Of the life and death of the renowned Sir Philip Sidney, remembered beyond the great men of his time because, wounded himself, he gave his cup of water to a wounded common soldier. This biography shows him to have been a gifted man of affairs, entrusted with the dispatch of important business from his youth up, and none the less gallant for all that. While England continues to breed her Sidneys things will go well with her: but there are signs that the strain is running thin.

BONAPARTE, by Eugene Tarle. \$4.50. *Knight*. A Communist looks at Napoleon, and analyzes him according to the gospel of St. Marx. A badly-written book, and a prime example of how dull the proletarian ideology can make the life of history's most fascinating character. If the Comrades succeed finally in reducing all human history to the absurd and laborious confusion of this book, the world will be a sad place to live in. The translation, by John Cournos, is first-rate.

HE DID NOT DIE AT MEYERLING: Autobiography in Collaboration with Henry Lanier. \$3.00. *Lippincott*. Narrative of R, son of the Austrian Archduke Rudolph. You are to believe that the tragedy at Rudolph's shooting-box was a thing out of the whole cloth, the only victim being the unfortunate Mlle. Vetsera: also that Rudolph was a more attractive fellow than his contemporaries paint him. Reminiscent faintly of *San Michele*: totally unconvincing.

(Continued in back adv't section, page x)



POETRY

FRUITLESS HARVEST

By KAYE STARBIRD

WE stood beneath the tree when June was young
And love was younger,
And gazed up at a small jade plum that hung
Like love, too high for hunger.

We thought: our love is too untried and small,
The plum too high above;
We will postpone our hunger until Fall,
We will postpone our love.

And so we went our ways. Autumn that year
Was bleak and sullen,
For love had perished in a wave of fear;
And the plum died, wind-fallen.

EPITAPH FOR THE TOWN GOSSIP

By RALPH FRIEDRICH

FOR fertile brain and facile tongue
She thanked the stars that watched her birth.
But now, with only worms to prey
Upon her mind, she sours the earth
Beneath a shaft of tortured stone.
And there is none to wish her well,
While many are constrained to hope
That ears, at least, may burn in hell.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

HUNGER

BY JOHN ROBERT QUINN

I HAVE known hunger, bread in hand,
Felt thirst with rain upon my face;
I have known Lent upon the land
At harvest-time. I have said grace
And licked my platter clean as rice
In dusk-filled bowls, aware withal
That food alone would not suffice.
Who is this tenant of us all
Who cannot ever be forgot?
Is there no crust, no gem of wine
To silence him? Is there no pot
Of porridge where he too can dine?

THE MINIATURE

BY GLENN WARD DRESBACH

THE small worn case let in no light to fade,
Through all the years, the beauty hidden there —
A girl's rose-tinted smile, dark eyes where played
Strange lights and shadows under smooth black hair.
Our favorite uncle brought it from the South
When we were much too small to understand,
But we had seen him press it to his mouth.
And when he died, the case was in his hand.

No other pictures like it had we found
In family albums that were stored away.
The rest looked just alike! Our mother frowned
When we brought forth the miniature that day. . . .
She mumbled something, as she put it down,
About moon-madness in an island town.

AMERICANA

CALIFORNIA

THE *Hollywood Reporter* observes Sunkist tradition by making light of the disastrous California floods:

Many of the movie players slept in the dressing rooms on sets at Paramount last night so they wouldn't have to go home in the *heavy mist*.

ANOTHER noted thespian joins the ranks of high-salaried Artists, as reported by *The Talk of Hollywood*:

A couple of years ago Shorty, a chimpanzee, was an obscure resident of Africa. Then, almost overnight, he became a film actor. Today, after fifteen successful performances, he was elevated to stardom at \$350 a week.

Seated in a barber's chair, blinking at photographers' flash bulbs, the chimpanzee was treated to a manicure, a pedicure, a shampoo, a dental checkup and a wardrobe fitting.

Shorty has a chimpanzee pal, Ditto, who has been engaged as Shorty's stand-in at \$50 a week.

CONNECTICUT

OUR esteemed neighbor, the Ridgefield *Press*, prints a fair-minded advertisement:

NOTICE

If the ones who took my table out of the carriage house and took it up to Guss Sturges' building and then came

and got it at night after people were in bed, also the chairs that were taken before that (and the party is known), if they bring them back there will be no further trouble.

Mrs. George W. Miller

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Miss VIVIAN LIEBMAN, editor of the renowned *Vassar Miscellany News*, tells the Senate Committee on Education and Labor where to get off, as reported in the New York *Herald Tribune*:

Vassar girls still take their husbands from Harvard, Princeton, and Yale rather than from transient camps.

PROFOUND observation on a timely topic, as expressed by the Hon. Robert F. Rich of Pennsylvania, and recorded in the inimitable *Congressional Record*:

There are a number of nations at war today where the majority of the people in those nations do not want war.

GEORGIA

THE Atlanta *Constitution* reports on the activities of two local holy men:

Every night, the Rev. E. O. Jolley and Brother H. C. Artley station them-

selves, equipped with megaphones, on either side of Hollywood Cemetery, to scare away petting parties. Just as the boy friend says to the girl, "Let's have another drink," comes the strident admonition from the darkness: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

ILLINOIS

ALARMING compromise with Satan, as vouched for by the alert Elgin *Daily Courier-News*:

Dr. John C. Spencer, pastor, noticed that the attendance at the Sunday evening meetings of the young people had been dropping off to an alarming degree. He consulted with several leaders of the group to find the cause, which proved to be none other than Edgar Bergen's creation, Charlie McCarthy, voted by popular acclaim the most popular "man" of 1937. It seems that this favorite radio program is in progress at the time scheduled for the meeting of the club and many of the young people are loath to leave their radio in the midst of Charlie's appearances.

After giving the problem due consideration, Doctor Spencer announced today that hereafter, until further notice, the Sunday evening club will assemble at 7 at the church where they will first hear Charlie McCarthy. The regular period of devotion will follow.

THE illustrious Chicago *Tribune* reports a confusing sign on display in Jackson Park Hospital — in the Obstetrical Ward:

NO CHILDREN ALLOWED.

INDIANA

A CANDIDATE for sheriff in Floyd County turns on the heat against the local Tammany Hall:

TO THE VOTERS OF FLOYD COUNTY:

Vote for and elect me Sheriff. I will give four years of honest service, sober, with sober, efficient deputies, men who are of good principle in every respect. I will pay them out of the income of the office a salary sufficient to live upon. Then they must do their duty or I would be obliged to discharge them for failure of duty or misuse of office.

I will collect taxes at or near the people's homes and I guarantee that they will not have to come to Prestonburg and spend five dollars paying three dollars' worth of taxes. The people will not be taxed one extra dollar for the privilege of keeping a dog. Let Old Ring go free.

I will not arrest one man for a crime and let another go free. We should all have the same protection under the law, and all be punished for a crime the same, regardless of position. There is a class who wants to punish the poor and let the richer go free.

The Stumbo Ring boasts of their money and how they are going to buy into office. They even say I will not fight, but I will show them that I CAN fight and WILL. When the thinking men and women of Floyd County and I get through with them, they will think they had a fight. They go about telling how closely related we are. That is told for my hurt only.

People, people, you must not listen to the sound of the Stumbo Ring, because they have had thirty-two years' experience. Why, I am only forty

years old, and at that they have had a finger in Floyd County's treasury since I was eight years old. You might say that the young Stumbos have been practically raised from the support of the people. Why do we have officers if we cannot vote them out? Why not appoint them Kings and call them King Stumbo the 4th or 5th? But why not vote them out? I am a man who will stay with them until I am counted out. Their barrels of money cannot buy me. I was born full of honest principles that cannot be bought with any sum of money. I am with them to the finish.

They speak of me having some brothers of bad character. They say I might make them deputies. That will never happen, but, if I did, my nine brothers altogether are not as bad as some of that Stumbo Ring. I could name several of them, which I may do later.

Just a few hints to get you voters started to thinking. I will give you the rest later.

Your support and influence appreciated.

DIAL SALISBURY

TENNESSEE

PORTENT of the 1938 congressional elections, as recorded by the Sumner County *News*:

Hub Perdue received a telegram Wednesday from the Hon. Richard Atkinson which stated that he had talked with President Roosevelt and from this conversation he believed that both the Court House and the Sewage Disposal Plant were going over in the near future, according to present indications.

IN OTHER NEW UTOPIAS EIRE

THE Uplift descends upon the land of colleen and Blarney Stone, according to the *Manchester Guardian*:

A young Glasgow girl who kissed a boy while on holiday in the Irish Free State this summer will be unable to return to that country in consequence of a sentence imposed by the district justice at Dundalk, Co. Louth. One month's imprisonment was ordered under a recent Free State Criminal Law Amendment Act with the idea, the justice said, of keeping her out of the country. The case was reported by the Blackrock Vigilance Committee, and it was stated that the couple were kissing in church grounds. It was agreed that nothing "immoral" had happened. A week ago the boy was ordered to pay £2 to an Irish church charity and costs "for an act of impropriety in a public place." The justice held that the incident was likely to cause "a grave scandal."

The Vigilance Committee was commended by the justice for their action.

ENGLAND

THE London *Daily Express* introduces a delicate touch of censorship in its report of an important event:

A fashionable audience—with Queen Mary in a stage-box—roared with laughter at the Haymarket Theater, London, last night as Dame Marie Tempest closed the first act of her new play, *Mary Goes to See*, with the words "Obviously a ——" (what the dictionary calls the female of the canine kind or opprobriously a woman).

THE OPEN FORUM

THE ART OF VOTING

SIR: The future of these United States might be more secure, a number of sour happenings in the offing might be averted, if suddenly we had the means of reducing the number of voters in the land to some sharply-lowered fraction of its present total. The theory that we should be better governed by a smaller and more knowing electorate exhibits so much self-evident truth, that it has been made the basis again and again of specific schemes for reform. Yet in any practical sense, all these schemes are fantastic. Under our present democracy, there is no way to bring them into being. Only through the compulsions of a dictatorship would the American citizen ever yield his franchise. It is the one right he cherishes above all others.

Indeed, the proposal that his vote be abridged is probably more shocking to the American than any other suggested limitation of his privileges. Invasions and downright negations of other and more important privileges do not similarly chill his spine or prod him to a defensive rage. Almost joyously he renders his right of free speech, applauds preposterous censorship and laws that limit it, and on occasion joins mobs that suppress it.

With an equal happiness he submits to legislation which regiments him and pokes a long, bureaucratic nose into his private doings. He even, within a few weeks after the last declaration of war, yielded with patriotic yelps of approval to conscription, a modern variant of slavery, which substitutes universal for limited bondage. But never under the current democracy will he surrender his right to go to the polls.

His possession of this right is as curious

as his love of it. The signers of the Declaration of Independence could subscribe to the doctrine that all men are created free and equal, but they were realists as well as rhetoricians. Their realism prompted them to believe that freeborn and metaphysically equal as men may be, not every man is qualified to play at governing his fellows, even to the minor extent of casting a ballot. But the force of a metaphysical idea, exploited by politicians for their immediate interests, finally overwhelmed a realism which endeavored to set up some sort of qualifications for the electorate. The notion that the right to vote is almost as fundamental as the right to breathe acquired such a singular strength that it first extended the ballot to all adult male whites, then to all adult males of whatever complexion, and was at last able to triumph over a deep prejudice concerning the inequality of the sexes, and even women were welcomed to the polls. By this final enfranchisement, the departure from realism was complete.

But just why does the average American look upon the ballot as one of his sovereign possessions? We can dismiss as fabulous any idea that he burns with a zeal for good government and wants through his vote to insure it. A clue to his love of the franchise is suggested by the fact that the less he knows about the issues he is called upon to decide by voting, the more certain it is that he will vote. Despairing of the election-day farce, a minority of superior men habitually stay away from the polls. Not so the ninny-hammers of the nation, that is to say, the majority of the electorate. They are unfailingly on hand.

Nothing is more recklessly arrogant than ignorance. The psychologists would explain this by saying that an inner, wordless conviction of inferiority is compensated for by an outward harlequinade of power and knowledge. On election day the man who is unfit to vote, votes because of his very unfitness. On that day he clowns in the rôle of an agent of destiny; in casting his ballot, he exercises, as he sees it, a sovereign power over his fellows.

At present this clown has, from time to time, issues to vote for, unable as he is to discriminate between them. Later on it may happen in this Republic as it has happened elsewhere, and all issues may be withdrawn. At such a time, as in Italy, Germany, and Russia, the electorate will be invited to the polls simply to vote *yes*. But they will be invited. It is part of the technique of modern dictatorship to continue the popular carnival of election day. Nobody need be elected, and no issue need be determined. For the mob, the joy and the sole purpose of voting is to vote.

L. M. H.

New York City.



WHEN IS ADULTERY?

SIR: In Mr. Turano's article "Paternity by Proxy" he says anent artificial insemination that "it would be difficult to argue that procreation without copulation constitutes adultery". This was successfully argued in a case in Ontario in 1921. The case is *Orford v. Orford* which the curious will find reported in Volume 49 of the Ontario Law Reports, page 15.

This was an action for alimony. The husband's answer was a plea of adultery by the wife which, of course, if proved (in the absence of condonation, conduct inducing, etc.) is a complete defence. The wife admitted giving birth to a child of which the husband was not the father (it was hard to do otherwise than admit it as at all material times the Atlantic Ocean had separated

them) but alleged the child was the product of artificial insemination from a third party and therefore she had not been guilty of adultery.

The Court did not believe her story and found as a fact that the wife had been guilty of adultery in what it termed "the ordinary way". So, strictly speaking, probably the remainder of the judgment dealing with the definition of adultery is *obiter dicta* only and would not have the binding effect of a judgment under the *stare decisis* rule. But the reasoning on which it is based seems nevertheless convincing.

The Court said in part: "The essence of the offence of adultery consists not in the moral turpitude of the act of sexual intercourse, but in the voluntary surrender to another person of the reproductive powers or faculties of the guilty person; and any submission of these powers to the service or enjoyment of any person other than the husband or wife comes within the definition of adultery. . . . The fact that it has been held that anything short of actual sexual intercourse, no matter how indecent or improper the act may be, does not constitute adultery, really tends to strengthen the view that it is not the moral turpitude that is involved but the invasion of the reproductive function. . . . Sexual intercourse is adulterous because in the case of the woman it involves the possibility of introducing into the family of the husband a false strain of blood. Any act on the part of the wife which does that would therefore be adulterous."

The Court dealt with the lack of precedents by remarking "that such a thing could be accomplished in any other than the natural manner probably never entered the heads of those who considered the question before" and "that no authority can be found declaring directly or indirectly that artificial insemination would constitute adultery is not to be wondered at. This is probably the first time in history that such a suggestion has been put forward in a Court of Justice".

You might notify Mr. Turano that on

this point, the Supreme Court of Ontario would appear to be definitely "agin him"

W. P. MACKAY

*Simcoe,
Ontario.*



THE JEWS AND FASCISM

SIR: Nowadays, in the New York area, hardly a day passes that we are not called upon to work up sympathy for the plight of the Jewish race under Hitler. Newspapers in other parts of the country, where there are few Jews, and even fewer large Jewish advertisers, do not use the race angle quite as often as an argument against the type of totalitarian government Hitler stands for. I think the big Jewish advertisers of New York would be a lot smarter if they did not insist on so much of this type of material being published.

It seems to me there are plenty of good arguments against fascism, aside from the racial question, and that the Jews, by plugging this angle for all it is worth, are merely advertising it. They should remember that there does happen to be a strong anti-Jewish sentiment in certain parts of this country. There are places in the Adirondacks which brutally display such signs as "No Jews Allowed", and that there are other more polite, but equally firm, communities, such as Palm Beach, where it is very difficult for a Jew to rent or buy property. Now the people responsible for this anti-Jewish attitude are not liable to be deeply moved by Nazi atrocity stories. In fact, I have heard many Americans, who do not like Jews — or Mr. Hitler — admit that the only thing they like about Hitler is his treatment of Jews. Thus, they have been sold, already, on one point of the fascist program.

I think the reason why the Jews in most countries have always had to travel a hard road is because, as a race, they've insisted on retaining their racial identity, and have thus remained strangers in any land where they may be found. They have not been

liked simply because they have stubbornly insisted on being different.

Unfortunately it is a common human failing to distrust anyone who stands out as being different from his fellows. We distrust people who dress extraordinarily. The bank president who would dare to sit, cross-legged behind his counter, wearing only a baggy diaper, would soon have a run on his hands, and end up either in an asylum or on relief. Yet a man in India can assume such a posture, wearing such a costume, and capture the faith of millions of followers. We also distrust people whose mental habiliments are out of the ordinary. The history of the persecution of genius is a long and shameful one, but men, who are exceptionally well-endowed mentally, expect to be persecuted, and doubtless some of them get a certain masochistic pleasure from their sufferings.

Possibly this may explain in part why the Jews in free America are now raising such a hullabaloo about the horrors taking place in Germany and what once was Austria. The pleasures of masochism, after all, are chiefly anticipatory. Still, it seems to me, if the Jews of America really wish to avoid a bastinado wielded by a majority, it would be the better part of wisdom for them not to make such an issue of the race problem. The surest way to avoid a race problem is to stop talking about it.

It's my idea that whatever excitement the Jews may possibly arouse on the Hitler situation will be merely academic. Non-Jews have worries of their own closer home, and it is my hunch they haven't time to worry about the fate of Jews under fascism, or the equally dreadful lot of the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the Dodecanesian Islands off the Coast of Asia Minor, which the Italians took over a couple of years before the World War without upsetting any international apple-carts. The world was too busy, then, worrying about what the Kaiser might do to the map of Europe to worry about fourteen small islands, and the world is too busy now, I'm afraid, to worry

about what Hitler does to a few hundred thousand Jews.

RIVES MATTHEWS

*Hastings-on-Hudson,
New York.*

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FDR DEPARTMENT

SIR: Having been financially rubbed out in 1932, I was one of the throng howling for Hoover's blood. Screaming vengeance on the then-existing order of things and loud in any acclaim of the Great Humanitarian who was to bring order out of chaos, distribute the wealth, correct abuses forced upon us by Wall Street and malefactors of great wealth, and establish the Abundant Life for all and sundry. Loud and long was my applause when he tossed that massive brow wreathed in beaming smiles and boomed "My Friends". It shook me to my foundations and warmed my soul and I said "Yea, give him the extraordinary powers he asks, for here's a gentle, but firm and smiling leader, who has said he will reduce government bureaus and useless costs, balance the budget, reduce taxes and produce the Abundant Life, for he "has planned it that way."

Alas! another illusion spoilt. Another idol broken. The Great Humanitarian is but a politician and a politician proceeds mostly by indirection, guided one per cent by duty to constituents and ninety-nine per cent by political expediency. Over the hurt forms of his greatest boosters he has dragged and built the greatest and most powerful political machine of all time. His promises to win votes, like any cheap ward politician's, have been one hundred per cent consistent in that they have been one hundred per cent reversed: instead of cutting down government departments, the tripling of bureaus and agencies; instead of the promised reduced taxes, greater taxes; instead of balancing the budget, creating the greatest peace-time deficit in our history; instead of the lovely Abundant Life, abundant unemployment — poverty, misery, and dirt.

Five years of recovery haltingly, power-

fully built at the expense of billions of dollars was destroyed in the most precipitous and disastrous decline over a short five-months period — because "he planned it that way". Five years of fine-sounding catch phrases and screwy concepts and a thirty-seven billion dollar deficit, the deepest depression and all that it entails. That is the net result of our Mad Monarch's reign to date. Where are the appeals to reason? When the return to common sense?

Los Angeles.

W. P. JOHNSON

SIR: Fatuous thinking on public affairs, among men of the Press, is seldom surprising in that it is habitual and notorious. There are few exceptions to this rule; but when one of the exceptions, the capable Frank Kent, succumbs to a popular delusion, it becomes news. In his timely discussion of "Roosevelt's Bid for Dictatorship", April MERCURY, Mr. Kent spotlights His Excellency's "itch for totalitarian power" and other foibles of our National Headache. But in his treatment of the Court phase, Mr. Kent states: "The collapse of the effort to dominate the Courts was, of course, complete. . . . If he [Roosevelt] had had his way . . . the traditional American form of government would have been an outdated memory of the past." And so on.

This interpretation of the Court affair is all the more to be regretted because to Mr. Kent must go the credit of forecasting the attack on the Courts as early as April, 1936 (MERCURY), and the tale of the success of the Roosevelt coup would have made a splendid follow-up. For the attack on the Court was a complete victory. The traditional American form of government has become a memory. Roosevelt had his way. The Roosevelt Bid for Power is no longer a bid: He has bought it. He and his cabal are in the saddle, still riding hellbent. We are not "on our way" to Dictatorship. We have arrived.

*Minneapolis,
Minnesota.*

J. E. FULLER

SIR:

A Gentleman of dictum is the latest victim,
Because he aspired to be King.
But he's started down, without gaining
the Crown —
'Tis Roosevelt, my friends, poor thing.

'Twas only last fall, that nearly all
Sang loudly the Roosevelt tune;
But listen to-day, and hear them say,
"Why, he's a horrible 'goon'".

I laughed at the song, and was told I was
wrong,
When I hooted their cries and hues;
But in less than a year, 'tis easy to hear,
Their dolefully sounding blues.

To his fireside chats, with our dogs and cats,
We listened to promises made,
To eliminate strife, an abundant life —
What a game this creature played.

How he worked between Lewis and Green,
Playing two ends to the middle,
Reaching his heights with sit-down strikes,
And teaching new ways to diddle.

One mistake was made, when he venge-
fully bade,
To our Highest Court, this Hugo:
Who had taken an oath, to forever loathe
The Catholic, Jew, and Negro.

But the big error came, when he tried to
frame,
A bill to gain more power.
Yes, the odor that's "smelt", is Frank
Roosevelt,
And its gaining more stench by the hour.

It isn't nice to crow that I told you so,
But my feelings I cannot abandon,
So may I just say, in a quiet way,
I'M THE GUY WHO VOTED FOR
LANDON.

A. A. JORDON

*Virginia Beach,
Virginia.*

ORCHID DEPARTMENT

SIR: Of all the clumsy efforts at dissimulation, THE MERCURY is the rawest and crudest among the many reactionary pro-Fascist publications now abroad in this land. What many of us are wondering is whence comes the flow of money to support publications and efforts of this kind. To ferret out and publicize these instigators of subversive activities is the foremost duty of anyone calling himself a true American, regardless of race, creed, or color. Your specific purpose seems to be to raise class and racial hatred to the end that liberal tenets on which this country were founded may be destroyed. Why not put the Swastika on the front cover and be done with it?

CLARENCE H. LOW

New York City.

SIR: I find your magazine to be vital, pungent, and unprejudiced. In these days when practically all of our non-fictional or pictorial weeklies hypocritically maintain a dogmatic and monotonous defense of everything Bolshevistic, while they hold up the nauseating pretense of Liberalism, it is refreshing to find a magazine really Liberal in that it is unafraid to unearth a truth and does not hesitate to buck the stream of machine-made propaganda.

If I am able I shall make a point of giving away ten or more subscriptions of your magazine every Christmas.

R. CALDWELL PATTON

*Syosset,
Long Island.*

SIR: A friend of mine in San Diego inadvertently sent a dollar for a six-months' subscription to your little monthly brochure of Fascism. Of course the mistake was noted as soon as the first copy arrived — the sight of the thing nauseates us now, so we just glance through it to get a laugh at the absurd reactionary squealings of your literary hirelings. What puzzles us is that anyone would prostitute their time and talents (if any) simply for a few dollars

from the Liberty League gang. What's happened to Mencken? He lacks the humor of the old Livery Stable Philosopher. Where he was formerly ridiculous, he is now merely stupid.

*El Cajon,
California.*

W. GRAY

SIR: I have found THE MERCURY one of the most stimulating magazines it has been my good fortune to read. Faced with a serious problem of precarious living in these days of CIO strikes, NLRB planned elections, and what-not, I have rejoiced at your outspoken articles that are so honest beside the soothing syrup we are accustomed to on our bread instead of butter these last few years.

*Chicago,
Illinois.*

MARY H. ZIMMERMAN

SIR: You are so ununiformly critical of everything and everybody connected with the New Deal that I find myself reluctant to believe any factual statement in your magazine. I could write pages about the stupid conservatism of your magazine but it would be to no purpose. I could sign you to the perdition which eventually comes, I am convinced, the dwelling place of all those who shut their eyes to the truth.

*Alpine,
Texas.*

E. C. COLEMAN

SIR: Of all the magazines on the market today designed to appeal to intelligent readers, yours is the most asinine that has come to my attention. It is so full of untruthful and distorted facts assembled in such an unfair and biased manner about our national government. I like a magazine that is broadminded, sees two sides of a question and presents both, seeing some good in the things that are happening and is willing to give even the devil his due. Your magazine is lacking in all of these.

*Pasadena,
California.*

D. F. COBB

SIR: I am a pioneer subscriber to your splendid magazine, and through the years have never lost my interest. At this moment I have sixty-eight copies distributed about my house, in bedrooms, on living room tables, and a goodly number in every magazine rack, and with this distribution I am convinced that no one need be without good reading. I read it from cover to cover, including the advertisements. I have made this statement many times: "I do not always approve of what you say, but I know darn well it is the truth." With every good wish for those responsible for fearless expression.

MRS. FRED C. DEGGENDORF

*Winona Lake,
Indiana.*

SIR: For gracious sake! What a smelly bouquet of orchids arrives in THE MERCURY mailbox. I wonder how you still possess the seemingly marvelous ambition of going light-heartedly to press each month. Please accept another orchid in the form of a literary balance sheet, audited by one of your ardent literary accountants. I'll list the assets, then the liabilities; the difference equals THE MERCURY's net work to the reading public.

ASSETS: Fearlessness in dishing up platitudes, principles, precepts, dogmas; the attack on all forms of established and organized government; putting the finger on graft and decay wherever found or suspected; the best reader-writer forum of thinkers found in any American magazine; the courage to knock sentimentalistic beliefs into a dowdy cocked-hat; the intent of erasing public-spirited glamour from governmental office holders. MERCURY proves that the more capable men, morally, intellectually, and educationally, do not enter public service because of the stigma attached thereto, and because too many lecherous say-sos and windbags attach themselves to the politician, dragging him down into the muck, providing he chooses not to walk the plank of feasible patronage. There are many other assets too, but let these suffice.

LIABILITIES: Too many articles written by Albert Jay Nock and Frank Kent. Mr. Nock appears to be an intellectual, bogged in a maze of haphazard dreams bordering on nightmares. Frank Kent knows how to write facts, but his continual snapping at Mr. Roosevelt's heels indicates a soap-box and Columbus Circle a better place to cry his wares. Your articles lack satisfactory emotional tempo, are of ponderous verbiage which hampers clarity and reader thrill and which negates recreational and inspired reading. Snappy, accurate wordage packed with zestful punch is needed.

But I'll keep on reading *THE MERCURY* because it makes me mad and stimulates thought. How does this orchid smell?

STANLEY G. CHOATE

New York City.

Sir: I have never been an editor, and I imagine that you, a professional, must resent a letter of detailed criticism from an amateur. Let me plead my long loyalty to *THE MERCURY* as my justification.

Chamberlain: "Soviet Russia's Wars of Conquest". Good. You have at least one article on the Soviet in every issue, usually uninteresting, but this one has some meat in it, and is readable besides.

Moody: "Dixie Debunked". Also good. Glad to see you going to the source for material.

Kent: "Roosevelt's Bid for Dictatorship". Kent is always able and readable. The article is important, and needed, but it reflects what I think is bad editorial policy. You are much overdoing your Opposition. I am in your camp too, but I greatly dislike the all-inclusive attitude of antagonism which you evidently share with publishers of the slick magazines and the large newspapers. You weaken the effectiveness of your stand by your really tiresome repetition, month after month, of denunciation only. A more dispassionate treatment would make better reading, be more convincing, and win more converts.

"No Children for Me". Essentially shallow, and not up to my idea of *THE MERCURY*'s standard.

Carroll: "Government on Wheels". Ho-Hum.

Turano: "Paternity by Proxy". Good old Turano! We can always depend on him for an elegant treatment of a titillating subject.

Dennis: "England Liquidates Liberalism". All right of its kind, but it's nothing but the monthly International Situation space-filler, obligatory in all of our best magazines.

Henry: "Horror on the Newsstands". A tour through the literary sewers, no doubt news to your unaccustomed clientele, but I don't see why we needed it.

Mason: "Portrait of a New Deal Senator". These features are always good, but they conform to a set pattern. Please discourage your contributors from trying to write like Mencken.

Devoe: "The Tiger". A change of pace, and well done.

Pratt: "Hot-Air Castles in Spain". Good, competent analysis of propaganda, appearing of all places in this particular organ.

De Sola: "She Died Young". I went for this one. I like Dorothy Parker's work, and could see a distinct influence here, but it stands on its own feet.

Nock: "When is a Murderer?" A pot-boiler of the worst kind. Mr. Nock is spreading a lot of words on a theoretical subject of no great importance, and contributes no original or helpful ideas.

Thomason's book reviews. This is one reason I stick to your magazine. I've read everything Thomason has written, that I could get hold of, since he was a Captain twenty years ago. What is a man like that doing in the Marines?

The poems, at least, I do not feel competent to criticize.

"Americana" is good, as always, but you're letting it slide. Make some of your letter-writers send in clippings for this de-

partment, instead of these interminable letters.

JOHN H. CARTER

*Webster Groves,
Missouri.*

SIR: I nearly shouted for joy when I read "The Truth About the Sharecropper", in the March issue of your magazine. The pitiful tales about these "downtrodden folk" have simply made my blood boil. Northern born myself, I watched my husband struggle with the sharecropper problem, — struggled with it myself after his death, and by '29 was most thoroughly cleaned out.

Mr. Moss's article is fair, just, and well-considered. More power and a more frequent hearing to thinkers of his type. Thank you.

GRACE M. NEELY

*Van Wert,
Ohio.*

SIR: Well, my one year subscription to your famous little magazine has finally expired, regretfully. Through your magazine we have managed to keep informed on situations Doctor Roosevelt would undoubtedly rather have suppressed. With the expiration of my subscription, I am not the only one who shall be terribly disappointed — I have passed it on to a circle of friends who have looked forward each month to the fearless manner in which the Editors cover the American scene. Perhaps at a later date, after society has been convinced of rehabilitation, your correspondent shall be a life-time subscriber to the little magazine which gave him many hours of enjoyment here in San Quentin prison.

F — N —.

*San Quentin,
California.*

SIR: This is a modest paeon of praise for THE MERCURY. Your recent issues have gratified me. But up until the past very few issues I had been considerably "off" the

publication. The reason has been, that to me, the magazine seemed to have developed into more of a haranguing political mouth-piece, instead of the grand old literary mag of my college days that I used to take to heart in a quiet nook of the university library.

For several years, up until recent months, the grand old MERCURY seemed to bear the burden of all the ills of the land in economics, political economy, and matters of a sordid, or more sordid vein — stressing, I may say, the angles of war and politics more than their social, cultural, or elevating premises. To be more specific, of recent months an article "In Defense of War" as you carry in the current issue might have taken up more directly with the various salient issues of the science of war, rather than with the cultural and social bases and results of it, the latter appearing to me what the Magazine (to me) has always done the best in handling.

There has always, until recent years, been a *very* high and deep respect and admiration for the MERCURY; it has been one of my loves of literature. I doted on it. But for these last seven years I had to move it out of the library. This current issue, though, gives me a thrill of hope that my old comrade is again taking on the high and noble aspects of my fine old "literary and cultural Mag". Such articles as, "How To Make Your Son a Misfit" (though I have no son — that I know of) "Why Get Married", "The Art Of Cider Drinking", "Getting Away from it All", "The Wart That Shook the World", "Assault On Freedom", — and three cheers for the verse. And that review by Thomason on the passing of the white man, was to me almost a 1938 classic in fine writing and delectable word choice.

In the magazine field, at least insofar as the newsstands are concerned, it always appeared to me that THE MERCURY filled a very deep and individual need, America's outstanding *literary* magazine. Our college halls used to hail its arrival as the literary

handbook of modern American literature; an outstanding book review, a fiction yarn that could not be easily forgotten. It *was* really a pinnacle of American cultural life. But in recent years it sho did slip off the pinnacle; it was anything but literary, it was political, carrying articles that bespoke of the sorriest issues of American life, communism, and fascism, and all too frequently not of the cultural angles to give the items an excuse for being in a literary magazine. We have no *Dial* nor other literary magazine. THE MERCURY stands alone as a cultural publication. Here's hoping she will continue to be literary and cultural as the current improved issue indicates. Here's three cheers for the "new MERCURY" and long may she prosper!

Cristobal,
Canal Zone.

SEYMOUR POND

SIR: You are supposed to be a "fearless, outspoken magazine". We wonder if, in fifty years, you will be as outspoken as Earl Browder. Please don't cuss, or burn this until you read it. There are a hundred-and-some-odd millions of damn fools that call us Socialists nuts, ignoramuses, fools, and crazy; alright then we are crazy, but it takes intelligence to go crazy: while they can be born a fool, live a fool, and die a fool. Under Socialism "They who will not work shall not eat" — root little pig or die: you get what you produce and no parasite — lice, tick, or bed bug — shall take it from you. The human race will have to pass from Capitalism to Socialism, to Communism to Anarchy to God's kingdom. Anarchist — one good enough to be a law unto himself — heeding no other law. You wise guys who always lambast Russia and the rest of us Socialists and Communists, ask us to buy and read your damn foolishness. Now cuss all you wish to do. This is from one of them damn fool Socialists.

Outspoken? You wouldn't dare print my letter for a million dollars. Ha! Ha!

Canon City,
Colorado.

SAM BARTLETT

CENSORSHIP

SIR: I wish to express my surprise at your publication of "Paternity by Proxy", in THE MERCURY. I object to the literary style and consider it very poor taste to write about this subject in the spirit of levity. It sounds like a dirty story. The whole story is offensive and vulgar. Recent sex articles in *Fortune*, *Readers Digest*, and *Business Week*, etc. are not disgusting at all because they give factual information in a dignified manner. Therefore, the information appearing in "Paternity by Proxy" should have appeared in a medical or scientific periodical if an expository explanation is too prosaic for your magazine.

I am surprised that Freedom of the Press does not blush at the way this story is written — knowing young readers also would see it.

MRS. IRENE MCLEOD

Azusa,
California.

SIR: Recently we have been treated to the sickening display of dozens of small-time politicians lifting their hands in holy horror at the publication, in a popular magazine, of photographs depicting childbirth. Is the politicians' pretence to excessive decency a defense mechanism of uneasy minds? Is it not possible that men who earn their livelihood from graft and duping the public have an uneasy conscience and leap at the opportunity of a cheap morality?

In any event, the attempt of politicians to establish themselves as moral arbiters should be fought at every opportunity. The mere idea of sleek politicians dictating morality to mature men and women is revolting.

ROBERT DRIEGERT

New York City.

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MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

SIR: I can appreciate many of the articles in THE MERCURY that are radical because their authors are stimulating, individual

thinkers. I cannot, however, respond to an artificial attempt for independent thought, when only selfishness motivates its author. "Why Get Married?" in the March issue of *THE MERCURY*, seems shallow and unconvincing; and I think the author's mistake was in her claim to be a wife. Legally, she may be a Mrs.; but in no other respects, for it is obvious that the anonymous author of this article is receiving no satisfaction in marriage only because she is giving nothing to it. Coldly she reasons that there are no advantages in marriage. Why doesn't she create them?

Only four years ago I was a modern bachelor girl, possessing all which the author seems to glorify. When I married, I too lived in a big city apartment. Today my husband and I have a charming little bungalow at half the rental cost; in an informal neighborhood in a small American town. The dog romps, without leash, in a cow pasture; and the basement has become a machine shop where "hubby" at the present, is building a house trailer for our summer vacation. We never have money any more for liquor, because we desire to invest our surplus in our favorite hobby, photography. Our time is richly filled with individual and mutual interests. They are not those of our grandparents—but they are equally absorbing. Neither is our congenial environment—nor our combined interests—accidental. As a couple, we have developed, and are yearly increasing them.

It seems to us that age and circumstance was never more promising for marriage; because relieved of former domestic drudgeries, husbands and wives have more energy and leisure to find happiness together.

MRS. IDA LEAVITT

*Bloomington,
Illinois.*

SIR: What man can resist the pen to write hearty congratulations to the author of "Why Get Married?" in the March issue of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*. Such profundity of thought and fortitude of presen-

tation must not go unrecognized. For she, having considered well the evasive and obscure fact that the family is the basis of Society, the very backbone of Society, has struck forth boldly to destroy this undesirable thing. What tremendous breadth of research must have been required of her fully to understand that the lot of the unloved and uncared-for children, stricken with the ravages of disease marking them the products of the policy of free love, is better than that of children legitimately born, raised with desirable moral training and unmarked by the stigma of an orphan's home. How widely read this wife, as is apparent from her lack of medical knowledge on the sorry consequences of persistent frustration of nature's strongest tendency and man's fundamental urge namely, the propagation of the race.

Gad, how I admire one who pits the petty disadvantages of wedded life against the disillusionment and disease, the abnormality and suicide of illegitimate love. We need more wives with the perspicacity to see that half a life spent in a night club is not only desirable but necessary and that the stability derived from home and children is undesirable and unnecessary. We need wives who will emulate the smashing logic of this wife in her conclusion that if cliff-dwelling destroys the harmony of married life and home ownership is impossible under our present economic conditions, the thing to do is welcome chaos instead of applying energy to rectifying these conditions. We need more unidentified wives whose modesty in opposing institutions of proven merit through centuries prevents them from receiving in their own names the plaudits of the nation's insane.

AMBROSE A. McAVOY

*Charles City,
Iowa.*

SIR: I am never going to be a mother—but I have been a father, twice. We did not have the children because we thought it our duty to society, nation or race. We had our

two children because we love each other. That sounds rather trite, now that I've written it, and probably brings a smile to your healthy face. Yet that is the foundation, the basis of it all. It may be that we are just the pawns of nature. Thrown together by fate, we loved, married; and to both that love was incomplete until our first child was born. That seems to be nature's way. Maybe it is destined that the human race shall continue despite what you may consider the hopelessness of it all.

Brooklyn,
New York. VINCENT W. GILLEN

SIR: (Mrs.) Anonymous (wedded in name only) is, by the contents of her article under the title of "No Children For Me", an A-Number-One notter. In opening she says, "I am never going to be a mother. I don't want to have any children." Most every other sentence in most every paragraph is dominated by the word *not*. Mrs. Anonymous is quite a notty problem; but I take it, not quite so anonymous as the signature suggests — however, probably her husband is.

Providing some one, it matters not who, could persuade Mrs. Anonymous to read the article (following her own) on page 418 in the April issue, under the title of "Paternity By Proxy," she might change from a notter to a doer, and thus, rejuvenate, resuscitate, rebuild, reform, rehabilitate, remake, the land of her forebears. May I suggest, in my feeble way, no one could be better qualified to be her assistant than Rex Tugwell who is always willing to roll up his sleeves in a good cause to remake the world?

NON DE PLUME

New York City.

SIR: Anonymous, who in April *MERCURY* states emphatically that she does not intend to have children, seems to have the materialistic viewpoint which she derides. Her main contention is that the children themselves would find no solace in life. Although her more personal reason is that she doesn't

wish to "expend energy or emotion" on them. But, just because she has not found spiritual or intellectual joys in life does not mean that her children might not attain these satisfactions.

There is a way of living, even in this "civilized" age which permits one to gain a good share of individual happiness. In the first place, merely to be a human being is mysterious and forever interesting. To observe other human beings is fascinating and to love a few of them is delightful . . . including children. Then there is the spectacle of the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon and the stars . . . infinite sources of joy to many people.

Perhaps, if this woman had not had the outwardly successful career she boasts of she might have learned to value existence more highly. It is not the poor who taste futility, but those whose way is made easy.

MOTHER OF THREE

Mercedita,
Puerto Rico.

SIR: I have read the article in your April issue entitled "No Children For Me" apparently written by a young married woman and it is my belief that it is a case of sour grapes and if it isn't she will certainly change her ideas a little later. I had a friend who used to express himself very forcibly in the same way on this subject but after he had been married twenty years he and his wife adopted a little girl. I, myself, was married for the first time when I was fifty (50) to a woman seventeen (17) years my junior who was earning precisely \$3000 a year when I married her, like the writer of your article. We had a fine, healthy son within a year and within the first seven (7) years of our married life we had five (5) children. There was something doing every minute. During this period all the children had whooping cough, chicken pox, and all but one had the measles, one of the boys was operated on for hernia, another one had an ear operation and one of them had pneumonia and nearly died. I had a very serious

sickness myself and my wife had pneumonia. We however weathered the storm and seem to be in good condition. With all these troubles I enjoyed the experience and life to me now would be a pretty dull affair if I didn't have a family of children to go home to, and I cannot remember that my wife was unhappy either.

If this young woman reads her own article twenty (20) years from now she will be surprised that she ever wrote it. I remember when my own mother who was about 69 years old and going through a successful operation in the hospital, on one of my daily calls said to me, "There are some patients here who never have a visitor. It must be a terrible thing not to have any one in the world who cares what becomes of you."

J. J. WAKEFIELD

*Boston,
Massachusetts.*

SIR: The letter signed "A Wife" in the April issue of *THE MERCURY* gives the old-fashioned angle—the honored wife who looks with contempt upon all who might intrude on her married happiness. But she failed to understand the article written by the young secretary who sympathized with her boss. There are as many neglected husbands in this world as there are neglected wives, and it is from the vast army of discontented husbands that the other women reap their future husbands. Times have changed and wives have no longer a life-long lease unless they fulfil the terms and conditions. Divorce is no longer only for unhappy wives—there are many husbands unyoking with the idea today. The job of supporting the family in these difficult times is quite as noble as the job of rearing the family and each must do their share or someone else will take over their work. Too many wives sit back in their so-called security thinking of themselves and playing bridge and attending lectures and being "all in" when their breadwinner comes home. An intelligent man knows among his acquaint-

ances women who hold jobs and keep bright and cheerful after a day of real work and has little sympathy for the woman who makes a bridge-wreck of herself. If this type of selfish wife doesn't want her husband to marry another woman she had better make herself more efficient.

A HUSBAND

New York City.

SIR: My three children were not "accidents", nor were they "brought into the world to recapture the interest of a philanthropic husband." Why does Anonymous try to fool us as to her true reason for wanting to remain childless? It is not because "life today isn't worth passing on", and she really isn't worried about "creating cannon fodder"—nor is there any great danger that a son of hers would ever be president of the United States. She is like thousands of married women in this country, who are financially secure, but hang onto their jobs, crowding others out of work. Having a baby means time out; for taking dictation in an office at "six months along", or modeling for clothes, just isn't being done. To this woman her \$3000 a year means more than a baby of her own. Perhaps it is best for her to remain childless, for even if she and her husband did "retire to a desert isle, there to propagate children and bring them up according to our personal values", their offspring might swim to the main land and begin writing articles. When Anonymous has her tumor, it won't be the brain variety.

RUTH H. LANE

*Los Angeles,
California.*

SIR: So Anonymous is going to give up and quit? There is no fight in her. To hell with the capitalists! I am going to rear three children and give them a better world to live in.

PEBBE LEMON SHELBY

Los Angeles.

SAID BY THE FATHERS

SIR: May I have the privilege, through your most excellent publication, of asking the American people to harken to a lesson from our forefathers, the men who conceived the Constitution of the United States? For the past five years there has been developed a propaganda to convert our government from one of laws to one of men. The strong appeal which the demagogue has in the minds of the masses was not unknown to those men who framed the Constitution. I would quote from the message of Alexander Hamilton in his first essay in the *Federalist*. Mr. Hamilton said:

"A dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidden appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greater number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people; commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants."

For five years we have heard the voice of the demagogue. His audible concern has been for the "Forgotten Man". A term chosen with astuteness! A term so vague that everyone can feel that it is he himself that the great Messiah had in mind. While, on the one hand, subtle promises, impossible of fulfillment, spoken in simple, melodic tones, have, like the fumes of opium, lulled the proletariat into fanciful dreams, on the other hand, from the same source, threats of political extinction, or bribes of the country's resources held in trust for its welfare, are made to legislators to force them to abdicate the duties of their office to the self-appointed Savior of the American people. That "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" is as true today as it was in the days of Socrates, must be patent to the most casual observer. Said Benjamin

Franklin, Chairman of the great Constitutional Convention, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Forget not the meaning of those immortal words of Patrick Henry that have thrilled every American schoolboy — "Give me liberty or give me death." Remember the words of Daniel Webster — "God grants liberty only to those who will have it and are always ready to guard and defend it."

HENRY P. STACY

*Detroit,
Michigan.*

ANNIVERSARY

SIR: How come there is not mooted a 400th Anniversary of the "Beginning of Printed Books"? Quote: "In 1438 one Laurence John Coster, printed from blocks a book of images and letters; Title: *Speculum Humanae Salvatioris*. Twelve years later John Gutenberg cut metal types with which he printed the *Mazarin Bible*."

Book publishers might use this subject for their 1939 World Fair exhibit.

WM. H. SHRADER

New York City.

OPEN FORUM PERSONALS

SIR: I have been quite astonished at the rapid growth of "The Open Forum" Department. Quite a bewildering array of letters appear in the April number. The Orchid Department, with the single exception of the one who signs himself a "White Russian", are all Left Wingers and their bleatings are all of the well known standardized type. The thing that puzzles me is why such gentry are allowed so much space. Why don't they go patronize their own journals? The letter of the Congregational Pastor, Egbert W. A. Jenkinson gives some sound reasons why Communists do not all come from foreign countries, and why their doctrines find a fertile soil in the United States for a rapid and luxuri-

ous growth. The letter in FDR. Department was fine, signed J.E.F. The disgruntled Republican asks: "Why was the Republican Party so decisively defeated in the last election"? He should know the answer to that. The reason was five and a half billion dollars in the hands of Roosevelt's henchmen to buy the election. Correspondent Phil Kerby makes some thoughtful suggestions that I should like to see some of our magazine writers follow out. It is a fact, as he points out, that "The whole world is in the agonizing grip of something that has not been defined by any of our intellectuals on either side of the fence", and "there are sinister forces unleashed in the world . . . and the world right now is in the same position as Mr. Hyde—men have given way to the baser elements in their natures until it is impossible to control the brute they have turned loose".

ROYAL P. JARVIS

*Michoacán,
Mexico.*

SIR: Whenever I buy THE MERCURY I always turn first to the 'Open Forum' because I find that the letters printed in this section epitomize the mental outlook of the average American in a way that is not equalled in any other publication. And I note with pleasure that you publish a great many more critical effusions than flattering ones, for if you did the opposite you would ignore the opinion of the Great American Majority which is best illustrated by such letters as the one you received last month from Mr. H. Peterson of Philadelphia. Mr. Peterson accuses you of thinking that the 'people' are too childish and too stupid to vote, and that the majority behind the President are of the infantile mentality and morality of a twelve-year-old child, which, in his view, is a gross insult to the intelligence of people who really think.

What could better illustrate the mental outlook of the average Americano than this reproach? Who will deny that he actually

DOES believe that most Americans are intelligent and really think? This is a part of his creed and he would as soon abandon it as he would cast reflections on the Declaration of Independence. And as long as you publish articles that deride the majority and its asinine ideas, your circulation will remain what it is, because only a very small minority of Americans so much as *understand* what you are trying to tell them, much less agree with it. Well, you have made your choice, and I for one shall not quarrel with it. When the Communist Bloc obtains control of that rabble which elected Roosevelt for a second term and turns the United States into a Soviet, your magazine will be abolished and you yourselves will be lucky if you escape into Canada with a whole hide. For there is nothing the rabble hates as much as the Truth.

And just for fun, and because I have a few minutes to spare, I will tell Mr. H. Peterson of Philadelphia what IS the Truth. The Truth is that the "people" of the United States, like the "people" of England, France, Germany, or any other country ARE too childish and stupid to vote and the majority behind the buffoon in the White House ARE of the infantile mentality and morality of a twelve-year old child, and if Mr. Peterson does not know that it must be because he knows nothing. If he would take the trouble to consult the intelligence tests made by the U. S. Army on the men recruited for service during the late European War he would discover that about 86 per cent of them had the mentality of a boy of fifteen or under and *most* of them (70 per cent) had LESS. And these men, who numbered 1,700,000, were taken from every class in the country and were thoroughly representative of the American people as a whole. But will Mr. H. Peterson of Philadelphia believe this? He will not, any more than he will believe that all men are NOT created equal but *unequal*, and that they are NOT endowed with inalienable rights by anyone, least of all the Creator. I mention this merely as another instance of the

strange delusions from which the average American suffers, mainly because they have been crammed into his head at a time when he was too feeble to resist the operation.

But if he were ever to have the courage or intelligence to examine them, he would discover that they were fundamentally false, and that no fact is more glaring or easily demonstrable than the fact that the great masses of people in any given country are hopelessly stupid and ignorant and for that reason should never be allowed to vote. This should be obvious from the mere fact that in the United States they voted for Roosevelt, the man whose theories and experiments have been a gigantic failure from start to finish and who has cost the country thousands of millions of dollars and is plunging it into another major depression at this very minute, quite apart from the fact that he is a born demagogue, self-advertiser, megalomaniac, and petty tyrant.

And if all this proves nothing to Mr. H. Peterson of Philadelphia it will at least prove one thing, viz., that he must be a member of that majority behind Mr. Roosevelt, of whose mentality he has such a high opinion.

H. MURRILL

*Tenochtitlán,
Mexico.*

SIR: I was one of the founding subscribers of THE AMERICAN MERCURY and have followed its destinies and enjoyed much of its offering but I am now constrained to ask a question regarding its contents: Do you think that a majority of your subscribers are interested in the lengthy and many times dull communications you offer in "The Open Forum"? The April issue devotes nearly a fifth of its reading matter to this department and some of the stuff is discouraging and banal.

I for one, would be very glad to read more of Mr. Nock for whose opinions and articles I have always had the highest admiration. Perhaps you will take on a few more paid articles and not compel the

attention we now give to very small print.

ROBT. G. EARLEY

SIR: The comment in the Open Forum sounds like the despairing moans from Pershing Square, Los Angeles. My Welsh is up, so I waste one of Farley's stamps on you.

Re-read that section of rehash contributors and I will send you a new stetson if you produce an original thought. Same old clack and repetition. Hardly a clear cut idea in solving the present riddle of government. The score board did not light up once with a penetrating vision that would make you pause, think, and reflect. The nation today cries out for hope — not despair. Each of the writers look back — none forward. Any fool can read history backward. Can't you eliminate the waste of readers time by accepting the every-day thought that the big thieves of the Republican Right only want to change places with the little thieves of the Democratic Left? Do we have to be told again and again that this land is super abundant and that a balanced economy is needed? Shop-worn adjectives and criticisms do no good. The past is behind us. The people want to know where the country is headed. If you want to hang crepe, why not wrap it on your masthead? Thoughtful people are fed up with this backward-looking journalistic jingo. Put a new set of spark plugs in The Forum. All I have heard for some time is back-fire, and I have the habit of wanting my money's worth.

HAROLD DANIELS

*Glendale,
California.*

SIR: A gentleman from Woodhaven, Charles Sheedy by name, takes me to task in the March OPEN FORUM for quoting college professors, whom he considers as a class less reliable than MERCURY editors, to the effect that there are other things going on in the Soviet Union besides purges,

though it is true that only the latter make the headlines. All right then — let's talk about purges.

It is a self-evident proposition that the world's big-shots cannot afford to let Communism succeed in Russia or anywhere else. If that happened it would be only a question of time before it would become impossible for anyone anywhere in the world to live by owning something instead of by doing something. In other words the world would go Communist. That is why spies and wreckers in the Soviet Union are attempting to destroy this new civilization. And when these chaps are caught and dealt with as they deserve, the gentlemen who hired them kick up a dreadful fuss. Well, what did they expect? Did they think their gangsters would be given a free hand? The Soviet Government has done exactly what any other government would do in the same circumstances. A government is an organism, and like all organisms, it defends itself when attacked. Every government on earth suppresses active opposition.

The difference between Russia and other countries is that Russia committed the unpardonable sin of making it impossible to live without working. Hence the opposition from the gentry who used to live without working, and from the disgruntled ones like Trotsky and his followers who want it done their way or not at all. At that, Stalin has not yet equalled Hitler's record during the Nazi purge, when 1254 persons, including generals and high Nazi officials, were killed in one night. Not executed after a trial, as in Russia, but simply assassinated in their homes or on the street. Germany, however, not having committed the ultimate crime of going Communist, is forgiven by the diplomats.

We can see what would happen if the Soviet Government adopted a more lenient policy by looking at Spain. If, while the Spanish rebellion was brewing, the Spanish Government had executed a dozen or so generals, including Franco, and had lined up 100 or so of the leading traitors in front

of a firing squad, the 2,000,000 men, women and children who lie dead in Spain would be alive today, and Spain would have been spared the agony it is undergoing. There is every probability that by its vigorous measures, the Soviet Union has escaped sharing the fate of Spain.

My critic said something about Russian supremacy in the dance. If it's any comfort to him, this may not last much longer. For it seems that the various *corps de ballet* are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit new talent, because the Russians, the American press to the contrary notwithstanding, eat so much and so continuously that the girls are losing the sylph-like figures required of ballet dancers. The crowds that I saw on the streets of Lenin-grad and Moscow on a visit in 1930 were not as well dressed as a Broadway crowd (the textile shortage then prevailing has since been relieved), but the hungry-looking faces seen on the streets of New York were missing.

Only a moron will deny that in free services given to the citizenry, the Soviet Union leads the world. When Ivan's wife has a baby, the blessed event doesn't cost him a cent; if he requires an operation for appendicitis, that is likewise gratis; a job is guaranteed in the Constitution; vacations are not only on full pay, but with all expenses paid; expectant mothers get extended leaves on full pay before and after confinement. I could fill several pages with such items, but Woodhams wouldn't believe me anyway. So to sum up:

The Soviet Union stands solid as Gibraltar and the chipping of the MERCURYS and the Sheedys cannot alter it.

SAMUEL BUCK

New York City.



THE MERCURY AS SAVIOUR

SIR: Many of the letters to your OPEN FORUM ask why you aren't *for* something. I too would like to have you *for* something, *i.e.*, impeachment of Roosevelt and his mob.

Granting that the absolute zero of intelligence is now in our Congress, it is certainly up to a wide-awake journal to support such a move. Then, perhaps, even that crowd of morons could be forced to act.

With Hitler, the Duce, and Stalin raising hell, it is a bad influence on the type of mind we now have heading up Vulgar Family No. 1 in the White House. If we could have just one publication in this country whose avowed purpose was to throw the rascals out—even if the effort failed and dictatorship clamped down on us—we would at least have had the satisfaction of having tried. But just sitting here and allowing that mob to loot the Treasury and put us into their uniform is a disgrace.

JOHN J. CRUMBAUGH

*Olean,
New York.*

SIR: In my communication to THE OPEN FORUM last month, discussing the slogans put forth by the Left-wing to assist in the boycott against Japanese silk, I committed a grave error. I gave several inane examples of the Communist shibboleths currently in vogue, but they were not inane enough. It appears that I didn't realize how utterly asinine the Left-wing can be.

Researches on my part the last two weeks have uncovered more complete slogans, coined by the American League for Peace and Democracy, the Young Communist League, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New Masses*, and other propaganda units of Comrade Stalin's peace-loving government. I herewith present these slogans in their entirety:

"For Peace Set the Style—Wear Cotton, Rayon or Lisle."

"Make Lisle the Style, Wear Lisle For a While—If You Wear Cotton, Japan Gets Nottin'."

"Buy *Liberation Hosiery*."

"Union-Made Full-Fashioned Lisle Stockings—Special Discounts to Organizations Promoting the Anti-Silk Movement."

I think this will give you a more complete idea of what I mean, with emphasis on the phrase *Liberation Hosiery*. I have no doubt that the erudite Comrade who thought of that has received a free subscription to the *Daily Worker*.

Meanwhile, I am happy to report that the trade indexes for March reveal that the silk-stocking industry in America is back to normal. The boycott has fizzled out. What will the Comrades go after next? "No Vodka for Popka"?

EDNA M. ROSSETER

*Brooklyn,
New York.*



BRIEFER MENTION

Mr. Moody, who wrote "Dixie Debunked" for us did not "need to label himself as poor white trash," writes B. W. Douglass, of Trevlac, Indiana. "Anyone who knows the South would have recognized his status." This refrain is sung by half-a-dozen other correspondents from wounded Dixie. . . . The Englishman who wrote "To Hell With America" comes in for a further round of abuse. George B. McConnell, of Moscow, Idaho, thinks the tirade was useful because such British opinions may help us in the future to avoid the mistake of sending "some three million men to Europe to make the world safe for the British Empire", thus keeping at home "some of the fluid of the famed American milch cow". Charles I. Marvin, on the other hand, feels that England and America have much in common and ought to fight together, if necessary, to preserve freedom and liberty. . . . A lady who prefers not to have her name mentioned writes from Blair, Nebraska, a rather detailed argument to prove that "the sexual relationship is not always necessary". Her letter is interesting, but it goes into a little too much detail for this great family journal. . . . Fred Newcomb, of Santa Ana, California, resents Major Kernan's defense of war in no uncertain terms. . . . The real cause for the

Roosevelt Depression is the piling up of life insurance assets, and if it continues, "Relief, unemployment, and misery will be permanent and increasing evils, with either Communism or Fascism the only alternative to sterilized Capitalism", declares I. P. Mantz, President of the National League of Savings Bank Insurance of Des Moines, Iowa. . . . M. M. Thomas of New York opposes the boycotting of Japanese goods on the grounds that a boycott harms American workers much more than it does Japanese fighters. He adds—rather naïvely—that "many of those who advocate such a boycott are *believed* to be Communists". . . . An anonymous reader from Seattle, Washington, in referring to the article "Why Get Married?" remarks that we "have a good magazine—why spoil it with that half-baked type of stuff?" But concludes that the article "Our Uneconomic Royalist" is timely, logical, and very appropriate. Mercury batting average: .500. . . . Karl S. Johansen, of Houston, Texas, also has his piece to say about "To Hell With America". He rather cuttingly remarks, "Why doesn't said Englishman sign his name? Is he ashamed of it? He is probably one of the British who tried to crash the immigration gates and could not make the grade." . . . Apropos the article "The Truth About The Sharecropper", Palma Grahn sends us from Madison, Wisconsin, a clipping from the *Capital Times* which is the column of the New York Pinko, Ernest L. Meyer. How the Comrades do circulate throughout the country. . . . Robert E. Wood, of Boston, thinks that the article "Why Get Married?" is the "world's worst". Some of our readers thought otherwise. . . . An eleven-year-old boy, Harry Lipscomb, of Beaumont, Texas, writes a passionate defense of cats. He is especially opposed to their destruction and remarks that "some person has been putting poison out for cats in our neighborhood, because this is the time of season when cats are mating and—well, if you was a cat you would understand." . . . A spirited defense of chastity

is entered by Kenneth Dollahite, Fort Bliss, Texas. Well, his position may be right, but it will never be popular. . . . What this country needs is a return of Prohibition "total, absolute, and final, with firm, and honest enforcement", writes R. L. Godwin, of Dunn, North Carolina. He claims that Prohibition does not interfere with individual freedom, arguing that "the drinker soon becomes a slave to habit, and is not free to stop drinking when he wants to. The total abstainer is free either to drink or not to drink. The drinker is free simply to drink. Which of them is the free man?" . . . Considerable fault is found with the economics of Albert Jay Nock by Malcolm H. McDowell, of Clermont, Florida, and he advises Mr. Nock to read *Social Problems* by Henry George. . . . "Uninformed fulmination" is what Dr. Frederick J. Cotten of Boston calls "Dixie Debunked" by "this Moody person". The article has been widely discussed in Southern papers, Dr. Cotten, and a good many editorial writers have agreed with you. . . . Lawrence Dennis is nominated by L. P. Reynolds of Chicago, Illinois, as "the most brilliant writer appearing in *THE MERCURY*". . . . Enoch Morse of Minneapolis points out that Dr. Roosevelt's denial that he has any intention of becoming a dictator came on the eve of All Fool's Day—April 1. . . . Somebody ought to write an article debunking the box-top and label contests sponsored by our prominent radio advertisers, says Walter H. Cole of Tombstone, Arizona. He doubts that the judging set-ups are impartial. . . . From Logan, Utah, over the signature of William H. Taylor comes a letter informing us that "our so-called Democracies should be named Jewish autocracies and it is only natural for them to despise the anti-Semitic Gentile governments of Germany and Italy. . . . Mrs. Nell M. Dempster of Balla Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, adds her objections to the article "Why Get Married?" And its "deplorable and false attitudes". . . . Jesse Harold Day of Portland, Oregon, denounces our "inane repeti-

tion of lopsidedly circumscribed ideas"; to wit, our opposition to Dr. Roosevelt. He also questions the wisdom of sterilizing the unfit, as several recent articles have urged. . . . Several contributors have broken into poetry again, notably Franklin Hopkins of New York City who sends us "The Song of the New Stealers". Unfortunately space limitations do not allow us to print these lively verses. . . . Adolf Hitler is a great benefactor of the human race because he is instrumental in stamping out religion, says Arturo de Rohan of Tacoma, Washington. Denominational papers please copy. . . . There are only nine letters this month maintaining that the editor of THE MERCURY is being bribed by coin of the realm. The sources of this unclean gold were listed as follows: J. P. Morgan, alleged in three instances; Mussolini, two instances; and one each for Hitler, Henry Ford, Josef Stalin, and the Republican Party. This is far below normal. Evidently the Roosevelt Depression has hit the bribery business too. . . . The anonymous writer who contributed "No Children For Me" displayed "a sad perversion of the natural order, the complaint of an overcivilized being, and a deliberate denial of the maternal instinct", according to J. P. G. of Montclair, New Jersey. Quite a display. . . . We forgot to mention that we also received one letter this month denouncing us as paid agents of the American Communist Party. Well, that is at least refreshing. . . . Edward E. Smith of San Jose, California, had to go to the dictionary upon reading Jerome Mason's portrait of Senator Lee. He then very carefully typed out definitions of all the hard words in the article — but we are sure our readers understood them. . . . Joseph C. Rennard disagreed "most vehemently with practically every paragraph" in our article "Sports Writers Are Always Wrong" by Eliot B. Spalding. He adds that he has "no relatives or connections among sports writers", but does not make it clear whether he

is bragging or apologizing. . . . An ex-railroadman writes in to guarantee the authenticity of "Railroad Boom Town" by Laurence Bell and to express his admiration for the piece. He is W. J. Butler of New York. . . . After reading "Why Get Married?" the wife of R. P. Puret of New York City asked "why read the Mercury?" Mr. Puret replied that the article "The Art of Cider-Drinking" made the effort worthwhile. . . . Gordon E. Mettler, publisher of the Churubusco *Truth* of Churubusco, Indiana, believes that Matthew Woll and he have the solution for the Roosevelt Depression. They phrase it thus: "Would it not be well to stop penalizing business and industry for being successful in the past, and reward them through the agency of the power to tax by returning to that success? This sounds like a paradox but it can be done." . . . Newspaper reading has become an unprofitable and useless occupation, according to Deward Sims of Atlanta, Georgia. He believes more propaganda than truth is printed and defies anyone to tell which is which. . . . Juliet B. Furman of New York City offers her "condolences to the unfortunate lady" who wrote "Why Get Married?" True love, she adds, still runs its course despite reports to the contrary. . . . The same author is held wrong on all counts by Owen R. Washburn of Guilford, Vermont. And, of course, they are never wrong in Vermont. . . . James Chase of Galena, Kansas, wants someone to explain to him how President Roosevelt, "by allowing John L. Lewis unconstitutional authority to call all the workers out of a factory, leaving forty per cent of those that were working idle, and not allowed any work, is helping to employ the unemployed?" That, Mr. Chase, is one of the unanswerable riddles of New Deal America. Others are: Why is Henry Morgenthau Secretary of the Treasury? Who is Harold Ickes? And, how can there be *anyone* left in this great Socialist State who still believes in Dr. Roosevelt?

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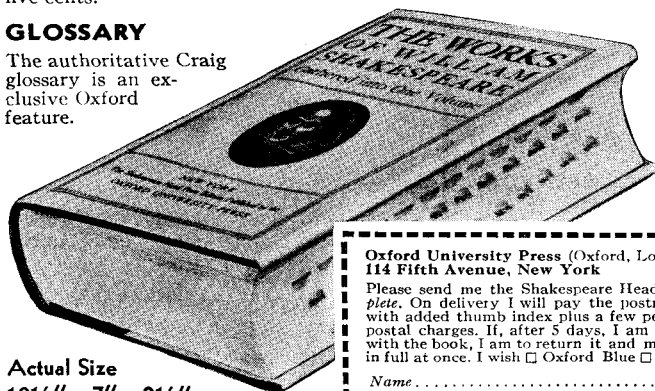
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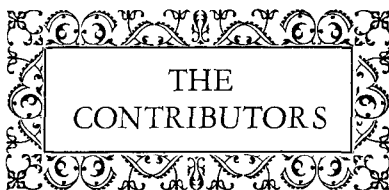
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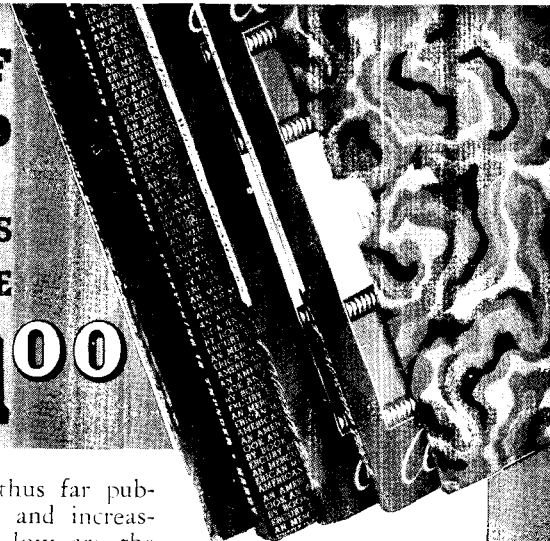
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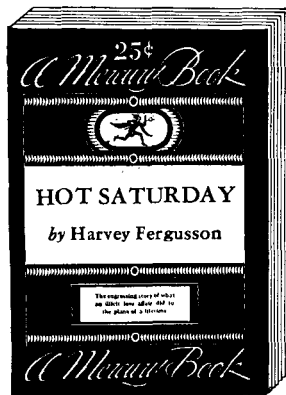


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